















**Between the Testaments**  
**or**  
**Interbiblical History**





# Between the Testaments

or

## Interbiblical History

By

THE REV. DAVID GREGG, D.D., LL.D.

*Sometime Pastor of Park Street Church, Boston, and Lafayette Avenue  
Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn; now President of Western  
Theological Seminary, Allegheny, Pa.*



FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY

NEW YORK AND LONDON

1908

COPYRIGHT 1907, BY  
FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY  
[*Printed in the United States of America*]  
Published February, 1907

176  
67

# CONTENTS

---

## CHAPTER I

PAGE

THE JEWS OF THE DISPERSION DURING THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS .	9
---	---

## CHAPTER II

THE JEWS OF THE HOMELAND DURING THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS .	45
---	----

## CHAPTER III

THE OLD TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA AS THE BOOK OF THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS . . . . .	65
--	----

176



## CHAPTER I


**The Jews of the Dispersion During the Period  
Between the Testaments**





## CHAPTER I

### The Jews of the Dispersion During the Period Between the Testaments.

E are interested in the ancient history of the Jews, because this history is the principal story of the true religion. The Jews were the Covenant People of the *One Living and True God*, and God chose them as the special medium through which to reveal Himself to mankind. They had a *genius for religion*, just as the Greeks had a genius for art and literature and the Romans a genius for government. A people's genius is their equipment for service in the world. It accords with the use which God makes of them. God works naturally in the realm of Providence. One would think that God would make choice of the biggest people of the world for the cause of religion; but no, He chooses the smallest and He chooses them because they have a *genius for religion*. Andrew Lang says: "*One tiny people for religion*"; and we might add, *one tiny land*—i. e., Palestine—in which that tiny people may work out their grand mission.

The history of the Jews, as it relates to Palestine, the land of the priests, and of the prophets, and of the psalmists, and of the Temple, and of the Christ, may roughly be divided into two periods. The first period covers the years and centuries from Joshua to the Babylonian exile. The history of this period is contained in the Old Testament. The second period covers the years and centuries from the return of the Jews, which began under Cyrus, to the destruction of the Jewish national power by the strong arm of the Romans. This second period is the subject of this chapter. It is the history of this period that we now seek. It is the period that lies almost altogether *between the Testaments* of the Bible. We wish, if we can, to fill up the blank space which we find there.

There are four centuries *between Malachi and Matthew*, and of these four centuries Bible-students ought to learn all that is possible. Proficiency requires it. Four centuries are a long period. There is room for immensity in such a period. You can pack into it dynasties, and revolutions, and discoveries, and eras, and whole libraries of history. During such a period you can change the face of the whole world two or three times, and make many new geographies, and give mankind many new civilizations. You

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

know how often this world of ours has been changed during the last four hundred years. The nations of the twentieth century are not the nations of the sixteenth century. There was no American Republic in the sixteenth century. The government of France was altogether different, and so was the government of Italy. The Britain of to-day is not the Britain of 1507. During the period *between the Testaments* of the Bible there were revolutions that were literally world-wide. These could not but affect the Covenant People of God, and tell in the evolution of the true religion.

We must know all there is to be known about these revolutions, if we are to be truly posted in the history of that religion, and have an inside view of things. When we leave the Old Testament, the history of this period is necessary as an introduction to the New Testament. To neglect the Interbiblical story of the Jews is fatal to any thorough and vivid knowledge of the New Testament. When we open the New Testament, Matthew and Luke take us at once *in medias res*. Things are not taken up by the New Testament where the Old Testament laid them down. When we begin to read the New Testament, we are in an entirely different world. The empire of the world has changed from the

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

East to the West, and the whole face of Jewish society has been revolutionized. New things challenge us: a score of questions get themselves asked, and demand a score of intelligent and historical answers. This score of answers must come out of this Interbiblical period. These answers are *between the Testaments*, or they are nowhere.

Listen to these questions!

Here is Cæsar Augustus issuing a decree "that all the world should be taxed!" Who is Cæsar Augustus, who issues a decree that is at once honored by the world? He is the Emperor of Rome, which is now the great world-power. But what is Rome, and how did it become the world-power? When we closed the Old Testament the world-power was Persian. Would you call a man a thorough Bible-scholar who could not answer that question? Here is Herod who is now the King of the Jews. Who is Herod? Is he a usurper on the throne, or does he come down on the kingly line of the House of David? The answer again is *between the Testaments*. Palestine is studded throughout with Greek cities bearing Greek names. The Romans did not plant nor build these cities. Who did? They were planted and builded by the Greeks. Can it be possible that the Greeks were a world-power



also, and that Judea was a province of their empire? The language of the inhabitants is no longer Hebrew. Where did this language come from? Was it once the universal language of the world? Instead of the age-long tendency of the Jews to idolatry, monotheism is the passionate faith of Jewry. How is this? There is, too, an almost universal belief in the immortality of the soul, and in the resurrection of the body; and this belief has an intensity and a clearness and a sway out of sight of that which we find in the Old Testament. Did this intensity of the immortality-faith come to the Jews, whom Jesus looked in the face, from contact with a people who were noted believers on this line? The Other World was a real world to the Greeks, and the body had a large place in their concern. Nobody taught immortality more clearly and strongly than Socrates; and Socrates was a Greek. Did the touch of the Jew with the Greek help the Jew in this item of the immortality-faith? There was a great mingling of the Jews and the Greeks during this Interbiblical period.

Here is the great council of the Jews, *the Sanhedrin*, presided over by the high priest. The Old Testament knows no such body. What was the origin of the Sanhedrin? Here are great and influential sects among the people with

nothing in the Old Testament to correspond to them—Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes—when and how did they come on the stage of Judaism? What is meant by the *Tradition of the Elders*? and who are the Scribes? and who are they who are denominated as the *Dispersion*? (Jno. 7:35; Jas. 1:1.) In every Jewish city there is an institution of which the Old Testament is ignorant, which is the center of the social and religious life of the people. It is called the Synagog. The Synagog was frequented every Sabbath—not for sacrifice, but for the reading of the Law, and for religious discourse and prayer. It was a democratic institution. Whence came the Synagog, and how did it reach its power? The land of Palestine was divided into three parts: Judea, Samaria, and Galilee—Galilee, from which came most of the Apostles of the Master. When did this division become a map in Biblical geography, and by and through whom? The very Temple of the New Testament, in which Jesus Christ taught and from which he drove the money-changers with a whip of small cords, was different from the Temple of the Old Testament. Who built this Temple, and when was it built, and how long was it in building? To this Temple Jews of all tribes, not only from Palestine but from all provinces of the world, came to worship.

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

How was it that these worshipers of the Temple had a world-wide home? The answers to all these questions, and more also, are *between the Testaments*. If this be so, then Interbiblical history is a period in the story of the Book of God, and of the True Religion, which we should master as students and leaders in the Church; and a period concerning which we should instruct the people. It is a period that is informing, and helpful, and fascinating.

At this point let me ask this question: Who are the authorities here; what are the sources of our information? Where do we get the material out of which to work up this period? We have such modern works as Rothschild's *History and Literature of the Israelites*, and Riggs' *Jewish People*, and Dean Stanley's *History of the Jewish Church*, and Cheyne's *Jewish Religion After the Exile*, and Dr. Emil Schürer's great cardinal work, *History of the Jewish People*, and the writings of Prof. R. C. Charles, the recognized authority upon Jewish apocalyptic writings, and *Jerusalem Under the High Priests* by Edwin Bevan (1904), and *The New Appreciation of the Bible* by Willard Chamberlain Lelock, D.D. (1907).

Then there are the original sources from which these moderns drew their stories—such as the

foregleams from the Book of Nehemiah, and the references to the Jews found in the works of the historians, Greek and Roman, who wrote the records of the ruling world-powers of antiquity. These are sidelights. Mahaffy's *Greek Life and Thought* gathers these for us. There are also the writings of Strabo, and Philo, and Josephus, and Eusebius. The Talmud must be mentioned; and also the Mishnah, and the Gemara, and the Book of Enoch. The Exilian and Post-exilic Psalms have a value here. These are Psalms 102, 124, 126, 137. Also the Maccabean Psalms. These are Psalms 44, 74, 79. The two Psalms 74 and 79 reflect the horrors of the early Maccabean times—the ruin of Jerusalem, the desecration of the Temple, the setting up in the Holy Places of pagan emblems, and the slaughter of the faithful. They grow out of, and reflect, the spirit and ambitions and the feeling of the Inter-biblical period.

We must not forget to mention *the Book of Daniel*, which was probably issued in its present form during this era. This whole period and more is in that book in graphic outline. True, it is in the form of prophecy; but prophecy is simply history written in advance. This the ancient people of God, during this period, felt in reading the Book of

Daniel; and they read the book as they made the history which it predicted. They got faith and courage and comfort in passing through the tribulations depicted, by dwelling upon the promised triumphs which were certain to follow. The triumphs were foretold by Daniel just as surely as were the dire tribulations. The glory of the Kingdom of God was coming, and so was the world-conquering Messiah. Things were going to culminate in Christ. The long development of Old Testament religion, with its Abrahamic promise, its Mosaic covenant, its Levitical sacrifices, its Davidic kingship, its prophetic hopes, its Messianic ideals, and strain of Psalmists, and redemptive purpose, was going to find its fulfilment and its point of repose in Christ. This is history now; it was prophecy then. Jesus Christ clasps the Old and New Testaments into one." All this sets into the light the great value of the Book of Daniel. It was one of the great books of the Interbiblical period.

Doctor Orr in his late volume, *The Problem of the Old Testament* (1906), sets forth, I think, the correct interpretation of the Book of Daniel. He says that *the Four Beasts* of the Book of Daniel (Chap. 7) symbolize and describe the four great world-powers which the Jews touched: *the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and the*



*Roman. The seventy weeks of Daniel (Chap. 9)*—i. e., the four hundred and ninety years of which these days are symbolical—begin with the decree of Artaxerxes and the mission of Ezra, 458 B. C., and close with the year 29 A. D., the year of Christ's entrance on his public ministry. (Orr. *The Problem of the Old Testament*. Ps. 458-537.)

The chief source of our knowledge of this period *between the Testaments* has yet to be mentioned. It is those writings which are known as *the Old Testament Apocrypha*. Some of the books contained in *the Old Testament Apocrypha* originated under the Persian ascendancy and portray life in exile; some were produced in Palestine and give the life and thought of the home-country; and some were written in Egypt and show the influence of Greek thought on Old Testament conclusions. Many of them give pictures of the inner life of the Jews during this transitional stage of time. Some of them, like the First and Second Maccabees, are straightforward history and give us the great and controlling events of Interbiblical history. *The Old Testament Apocrypha* will form the subject of a future chapter.

— In giving the history of the period *between the Testaments* I wish to set this fact in the fore-

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

front, and to keep it there—viz: the ruling world-power of that period was the Greek. The Greek as a world-ruler postdated the Persian, and immediately antedated the Roman. The Greeks came into power through the conquests of Alexander the Great, the king of the Macedonians. The Macedonians were not Greeks, but were of a ruder branch of the same stock. The royal family of the Macedonians, however, maintained descent from the old Greek heroes. Alexander himself had a Greek soul and Greek ambitions. He had the best of Greek education. Aristotle was his master. He was a champion of Hellenism. In the year 334 B. C. young Alexander with a force of thirty-five thousand Macedonians met the Persian army and dethroned Persia, and seized the scepter of the world. The Jews were now his subjects; and the empire of the world changed from the East to the West.

Josephus tells this story of Alexander: On his first visit through Palestine, in order to honor the Jews, he turned aside from his march, for the sole purpose of paying a friendly visit to Jerusalem, the Holy City. The high priest solemnly received him in great pomp; and Alexander in turn offered his homage to Jehovah. This story, alas, like many of the stories of Josephus, is pronounced by scholars to be a late

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

romance of the type Josephus was very fond of inventing in order to show what honor the Jews received from the great kings of the past.

Having made his famous conquests, the one burning purpose of Alexander was to *Hellenize* the conquered nations; and to unify all by making all Hellenist in spirit and in life. This became the ruling passion also of the successors of Alexander. How was this to be done? Not by the force of arms, but by the force of Greek civilization. This was more potent than the Macedonian spear, and more incisive. It was a body of ideas. Now what is more powerful than a body of ideas? Edwyn Bevan says: "The Greeks lived for the most part in little separate states, each of which consisted only of a city and the territory immediately around it. In these a kind of mental activity, hitherto unique among men, had been going on for centuries before Alexander and the result was a body of ideas, a way of thinking and feeling about the world, which could not be paralleled anywhere else. *We may call it Hellenism.* It was embodied in the language they spoke, in the literature which they were in the process of making, and in the political forms according to which their societies were organized."

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

It was this *Hellenism* that Alexander the Great and his successors counted on to do what military arms could not do—viz: to win and control and mold and make one the conquered nations of the world. I tell you that this *Hellenism* was a mighty power, and it has done mighty things in human history. Can the Hebrews resist it? *When Hellenism clashes with Hebraism, which will win?*

Our day has felt Hellenism. The ideas of the Greeks contained in them many of the germs of which our present Western civilization is the development. Doctor Quayle no later than last spring delivered a brilliant address to the Ministers' Association of Chicago showing our great indebtedness to the Greeks. In the conquest of Alexander the Great, the Jews are face to face with the greatest opposing power they have ever met. *It is now Hellenism and Hebraism.*

I wish just here to look at the agents employed by Hellenism to propagate Greek civilization.

(a) *There is first its form of civil government.*

The city, as we have seen, was the unit of Greek civilization. The Greeks were a people of cities. Now each city had its council, which was the governing body; and this council was composed of members selected by and from the people. A government of the people! That is

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

both popular and persuasive. It is bound to win its way. This was no small item in Hellenism.

(b) *There is second the Greek language.*

This language was both beautiful and musical. It had the power to express. It had the power to captivate. This language became universal. Now language is a wonderful unifying power.

(c) *There is third the provision made in every city for the social life of the people.*

That which controls the social life controls the people. It sets the fashions of the day and fashion is irresistible. You might as well be out of the world as out of fashion. What did Hellenism provide for the social life of the people? The stadium, the hippodrome, the gymnasium, and the theater. You know the influence of national games and amusements. They control the young men, and the young men control the nation.

(d) *There is fourth the literature of the Greeks.*

This is no small item. Recall the names of the men who lead here and you will be convinced of this. One volume will help you in this. It is entitled *Masterpieces of Greek Literature* by John Henry Wright, Professor of Harvard University. (1902.) The essay of Professor Wright in the opening of this book is



worth its weight in gold. Hellenism gives the world the works of such writers as these: Homer, Sappho, Anacreon, Pindar, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Plato, Demosthenes, Theocritus. In this book you will find masterpieces from all of these. The theaters kept the plays of the great Greek composers constantly before the people; and these plays educated the people in the morals and ideals and politics and religion of Hellenism. In those days the theaters were built to the gods, and were next to the Temple in their sacredness. They had the power in those days equal to the power of the *press and pulpit* of to-day.

(e) *There is fifth the schools of the philosophers.*

These were like the schools of the prophets in Israel. The Greek philosophers, like the Hebrew prophets, did the thinking for the nation and formulated its creed. The school of Socrates is a famous illustration. Socrates, like Jesus, wrote nothing; but Plato, his favorite pupil and intimate friend, wrote and gave immortality to the teachings promulgated in the school of Socrates, and introduced into the world the Socratic method of dealing with the great problems of life. You are familiar with the teaching of

Socrates on the doctrine of immortality. He struck the keynote of the Greek faith on this subject; and that note was clear and strong in favor of immortality. The fact is that all the Greek writers, we have mentioned, are clear and strong in presenting the fact of immortality. They believed also in the future of the body; and to show their regard for the body, they provided a golden urn to hold its ashes and keep them safe. Concerning the influence of the doctrine of immortality as held by the Greeks, Dean Stanley writes in his *Jewish Church*:

“The seed of Greek philosophy fell on the soil of Hebrew faith, and struck root downward to a depth from which it has never been eradicated, and bore fruit upward which has sustained the moral life of Christendom to this hour.” May not Paul, the New Testament apostle of the resurrection, who was versed in the lore of the Greeks, have been influenced by Hellenism, in the formation of his creed and in taking hold of immortality which he makes Christ purify and illumine and transfigure? The doctrine of immortality reached its climax when Paul was able to preach “*Christ and the resurrection.*” When Paul wanted a figure to set forth the Christian life he went to the Greek gymnasium for it; and when he wanted an argument to convince the

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

Athenians relative to the nature of the one living and true God he went to the Greek poets and quoted from Greek literature. You see that there is something of Hellenism in our New Testament.

Having set into the light the ruling world-power during the period *between the Testaments*, and having seen somewhat of the way it exerted its influence, let us now give our thoughts wholly to the Jews and their life. They were the makers of our religion, and it is in them that we are especially interested.

The Jews of this period divide themselves into two classes: 1st, *the Babylonian Jews*; and 2d, *the Palestinian Jews*—i. e., the Foreign-Jews, who afterward become known as *the Dispersion*; and the Home-Jews. During the opening of this period the Jews had two centers, Babylon and Jerusalem. Now both the Foreign-Jews and the Home-Jews were influential in getting the world ready for Christ, and in ushering in the New Testament.

Baron Hermann Von Soden, D.D., professor of theology in the University of Berlin, in his book, *The History of Early Christian Literature* (1906), points out to his students *the Greek hand*, in many places holding the pen of the New Testament. The hand may be the hand of

a Redactor, but it is still a *Greek hand*. He traces many of the New Testament thoughts to the Classic City. He writes: "It is by no means uncommon to meet with words and ideas derived from Hellenism which have become fundamental conceptions of the Gospel—e. g., the idea of *truth*." Of the Gospel of Luke he writes: "We have here conscious literary composition in sharp contrast to the naïve art of the Gospel of Mark. The parables we owe Luke are the richest in descriptive coloring that are preserved in the Gospel. He is the poet-painter among the Evangelists. The careful style of his Gospel forces the hypothesis that it was composed in the environment of Greek culture." Of the Apocalypse, which preserves for Christianity its heavenward gaze and its hope for future perfection, he says: "It is pervaded through and through with the spirit of an Alexandrian allegorist, mystic, and symbolist." Of the Johanne Gospel, which climaxes the early Christian literature of the New Testament writings, he says: "This Gospel met the need of the Hellenist mind and of all cognate minds. It is like the product of one brought up in the schools. Its declaration of the universalism of Christianity (John 3:16) is Greek. Its Prolog (John 1:1-11) with its conception of Jesus as the In-

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

incarnate Logos, and also many a thought in the body of the writing, shows an intimate amalgamation of the author's Christian belief with elements of Alexandrian philosophy." He calls Paul, the mighty apostle to the Gentiles, "the great founder of Greek Christendom," and quoting his famous saying (Phil. 4:8): "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things," he writes: "Nowhere has the born Jew, the rabbi, approached so closely to the moral idea of the Greek philosopher as in the conception of honor and worth which he here strings together. The beautiful stands side by side with the good in close fellowship. It is as if one heard the ripple of the waves at the meeting of the two streams which have their source in Zion and the Parthenon."

Let us first take up the Foreign-Jews and see if this be not so. I can now treat only of the Foreign-Jews; in the next chapter, I will take up the story of the Palestinian Jews.

The Foreign-Jews were not an inconsiderable element. They were greater in number than the

Home-Jews. They were richer and more consequential. The return from the Exile was only a partial thing. The vast number of Jews were comfortable and prosperous abroad, and because they were so they remained abroad. But God saw to it that the family of the tribe of Judah, in which the Christ was to be born, returned. That was the main thing. God had a mission in the home-land for that family; and God, too, had a mission abroad for the great host of families who remained abroad.

People have a wrong idea here about ancient captivities, and the policy of extensive deportations of the conquered people. No cruelty was intended. It was a political policy to promote the amalgamation of the conquered with the nation of the conquerors. Often the lands to which they were deported were better than the land they left behind; and grander opportunities for a grander and broader life were opened to them. There were open doors into brilliant courts, and into the schools, and into the high places of commerce. The second generation of the deported were often the nabobs of the land. This is what seventy years of the Jews in Babylonia prove. The majority of them were so well fixt that when the decree permitting the return came they wanted to stay where they were,



and they did stay. But in doing so they did not lose all interest in the home-land, nor in their religion; not at all. To them Jerusalem, with its unique worship of Jehovah, was ever the Holy City; and they often came to its solemn feasts. It was their ideal rallying point. They considered it a privilege to worship in the Temple of the Lord. They sent large gifts to the Temple treasury; and much of their money found its way to Jerusalem. Sometimes the reforms of the home-land were planned in Babylon, and the reformers to carry them out came from there also. They came even from the court and royal household. You see this in the book of Nehemiah. The reformer and organizer here was an Eastern Jew. History tells us that Jerusalem had even high priests who came from the Foreign-Jews. One came from Babylon, and another belonged to an Alexandrian family.

Let us not suppose that the Foreign-Jews forever made Babylon their sole center, for they did not. The Greek rule and the Greek language opened all cities to them; and the benefits and opportunities, and the enticements of trade, invited them to enter all cities, which they did. The Jews became cosmopolitan. No people became more so. Philo tells us that there were a million of Jews at one time in the city of Alex-

andria, and they were all Greek-speaking Jews; and they all for the most part kept their religion, and loved Jerusalem as the Holy City. This voluntary dispersion of the Jews explains the record of the day of Pentecost in the second chapter of the Acts, "And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in his own tongue wherein we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and Proselytes, Cretes and Arabians; we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."

But how did these Foreign-Jews keep up their religion? How did *Hebraism* in these widely scattered communities manage to hold its own against *Hellenism*, so that there were the tribes from all lands loyal enough to be present at Jerusalem on the great Day of Pentecost?

I answer, in two ways: 1st, *by means of the Synagog*; and 2d, *by means of the Holy Scriptures*.

The Synagog was the creation of a necessity—viz: the necessity of the Foreign-Jews for Holy

fellowship; "As iron shapeneth iron, so does the countenance of a man his fellow." The truth of this proverb the Synagog proved to the Jews in foreign lands,—Jew kept Jew a Monotheist in the midst of Polytheism; and Jew taught Jew the Law of God, and the worship of God. Josephus tells us that "the Jew knew the Law better than he knew his own name." In their Synagogs, which they built in every city of every land, these Foreign-Jews came together to confer, to argue, and to teach their faith to their children, that all might know that wisdom which begins in the fear of the One Living and True God. They searched out the Old Writings, and cherished and studied them. They received communications from Jerusalem, the mother of them all. They edited anew with many comments the words of their prophets, and historians, and poets. They wrote new settings of their wondrous past, which ever became more wondrous and glorious. They composed new enlargements of their divine doctrines, and new books of Psalms, and richer volumes of wisdom, and cunning expositions. They dreamed new apocalypses concerning the way in which God would bring right to pass in the days to come. Here in the Synagog they argued themselves away from Hellenism into a deeper and fuller Hebraism and

were made true and strong. We even have some of the results of the Synagog life. I refer to the fragments which Eusebius gives us from the work of Aristobulus. Aristobulus lived in Alexandria two centuries before Christ. It was his fond occupation to translate and combine Old Testament teachings with Greek philosophical systems; so as to show that the Old Testament Scriptures, when interpreted allegorically, had in them all the germs that were best in Greek philosophy.

The other great power that kept the Jews of the Dispersion true and active *was the Old Testament Book of God*. Because the Foreign-Jews everywhere spoke the Greek—which was then the world-language—the Old Testament Book of God was translated into the Greek, and put into the hands of the people. It was an added power to the Synagog. This version of the Old Testament is known as *the Septuagint* or *the Seventy*. It was Christ's Bible; and also that of the Apostles, and of the Gentile Christians. The 119th Psalm tells you what the Word of God is and does. The truthfulness of the 119th Psalm was verified by the gift of *the Septuagint* to the Jews of *the Dispersion*. It enlightened their eyes; it sanctified their hearts; and it made their lives according to the mind of the God of Israel.

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

The tradition concerning the origin and source of *the Septuagint* comes to us through the epistle or letter of Aristeas. It grew out of the literary spirit of the age, when Ptolemy Philadelphus, the broad-minded, the most distinguished of the Ptolemies, was ruler of Egypt. He was the Ptolemy who founded and developed the great and world-known Library of Alexandria. Into this library he gathered all the notable and praiseworthy works of the ages. He had these copied at his own expense. One day his librarian, Demetrius Phalereus, came to him and suggested that he have the Sacred Writings of the Jews translated into Greek, and placed in the library. These he assured him were marvelous products, and would enrich the library beyond compare. Acting on the suggestion of his librarian, Ptolemy Philadelphus sent to Jerusalem and requested the high priest to send him six picked scholars from each of the Twelve Tribes to do the work required. He sent also gifts of gold and silver and precious stones, and promised transportation and large remuneration for the scholars. Seventy-two of the finest of the Hebrew scholars came to Alexandria in response to this request. They were entertained royally, and did their work well. They translated the books of Moses, which were the nucleus of *the Septua-*

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

*gint*, and thus gave the Word of God a new and world-wide outlet. These seventy men did their work in seventy days; hence the Greek translation was called *the Seventy*. It is known by that name to this day.

There is a striking addition to this story, which gives luster to *the Septuagint*. It is this: Ptolemy Philadelphus, in order to satisfy himself as to the accuracy of the work of these learned men, assigned each man a separate cell where each made a separate translation of the Sacred Books of the Hebrews. When the seventy days were accomplished, the seventy translators brought their works to the library for examination and approval. It was found after rigid search and review that all of the translations were precisely the same. There was not a single deviation, not even of a single letter. This satisfied Ptolemy Philadelphus that he had a work for his library equivalent to the divine original. He sent the scholars back to Jerusalem crowned with honor, and laden with rewards.

Is this story true? Here is *the book*, and here is the name of the book. The fathers like Jerome told it as true. Notwithstanding, the cruel critics of our day deny its credence, and pronounce it a fiction. They say it was invented by some Jewish enthusiast for the purpose of embellish-



## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

ment, and to satisfy Hebrew pride. True or untrue, it is certainly a good story, and has a thrill in it. It is calculated to make *the Septuagint* go. The fact is, people like just such a story; and the more marvelous it is the better—i. e., the more readily is it accepted and believed and told and boasted about. For example, what would *the Nativity* be without those bewitching stories which center around the cradle manger of Bethlehem?—the stories about the Star in the East, and the coming of the Magi, and the flashing of the Glory-light, and the Song of the Angels, and the Nunc Dimittis of Simeon, and the Magnificat of the Holy Mother! If the critics should ever rob us of these, they would reduce *the Nativity* to the merest commonplace occurrence and rob Bethlehem of much of its power.

For centuries men believed the wonderful story told relative to the origin of *the Septuagint*, because *the Septuagint* was able comfortably to carry just such a story; and because the story satisfied the law of harmony and fitness.

This story is something like the story told of *the Apostles' Creed*, which is the creed of all Christendom. To begin with, the creed bears the apostles' names. It is called *the Apostles' Creed*. I find it printed in my copy of the New

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

Testament Apocrypha; and this story, affirmed by Ambrose, accompanies it: The twelve apostles as skilful artificers assembled together and made by their common advice this creed, by which the darkness of the devil is disclosed that the light of Christ may appear. Each apostle inserted an article; so that the creed is divided into twelve parts. The apostles, beginning with Peter, contributed as follows:

Peter—"I believe in God the Father Almighty,  
John—"Maker of heaven and earth,

James—"And in Jesus Christ his only Son our  
Lord,

Andrew—"Who was conceived by the Holy  
Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary,

Philip—"Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was  
crucified, dead and buried,

Thomas—"He descended into hell, and the  
third day he rose again from the dead;

Bartholomew—"He ascended into heaven, and  
sitteth at the right hand of God the  
Father Almighty.

Matthew—"From thence shall He come to  
judge the quick and the dead;

James, the son of Alphaeus—"I believe in the  
Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church,

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

Simon Zelotes—"The communion of the saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
And, the brother of James—"The resurrection  
of the body,  
Matthias—"And the life everlasting. Amen."

Notwithstanding the critics date this instrument as a document of the fourth century, A. D., you can see what interest this story of the construction of the Apostles' Creed gives to that creed. It makes it nothing short of a divine romance.

Men have ever given themselves to the work of weaving around great events and works the charm and the hypnotism of romance; and this has added a new power to the native greatness of these events and works. Men will ever continue to do this. Human nature likes it. This has led one of our late scholars to go so far as to say: "*A myth is better than a history by which we reveal divine things.*"

Concerning the story that has got itself told about *the Septuagint*, the Greek Version of the Old Testament Bible, we have this to say: True or untrue, quoted by the Christian fathers or repudiated by the Christian fathers, the book does not need it. *The Septuagint is great without it.* Its greatness is constitutional and inher-

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

ent. It was the power of God among the Jews of the Dispersion, because it could not help being such. It was the power of God, because it was of God. Such was its effect upon the Greek-speaking Hebrews, that it fitted them to prepare the nations in which their lot was cast for the coming of the Christ; and the coming of the missionaries of the Cross of Christ. Because of it, there were Wise Men in the East ready to start with their gifts to the cradle of Bethlehem the moment Jesus was born; and because of it, there were open doors into every nation for the incoming of the gospel. It made the Foreign-Jews missionaries of the Old Testament, and these Old Testament missionaries prepared mankind for the New Testament missionaries who came after. In other words, the Old Testament in Greek, prepared the world for the New Testament in Greek. If there had never been a Greek Old Testament, there would never have been a Greek New Testament. The Greek Old Testament was the forerunner of the Greek New Testament.

✓ This part of our study of the period *between the Testaments* reveals to us the wide over-rule of God in the universe in the interest of the Kingdom of God on earth. It exalts the Providential Hand. It centers history in Jesus Christ.

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

He is the center of the Book of God. He is the center of the reign of God. He enthrones Himself in *Hebraism* and He enthrones Himself just as surely in *Hellenism*. If we take simply the matter of *language*, as an illustration, we see this. He was in the midst of Hellenism constructing the Greek language, making it beautiful and perfect—a complete vehicle for expression. When He had completed this work, then He Himself came to the world, the Son of God incarnate, the perfect revelation of the *All Father* of whom Homer, the king of Greek literature, speaks; and He gave this perfect revelation of the Divine to this perfect language, *that in the form of the Greek New Testament* it might be carried to all the kingdoms and nations of the world, so that men everywhere might know the true God and be saved.

Between the Testaments, there was a divine power at work conserving and utilizing the Old, and shaping the instruments and gathering the materials for the construction of the New, that both Testaments might bless the world.

POSTLUDE

Professor Mahaffy of Dublin University writes of the Jews during this period:

“It is true that the Jews occupied but a small territory in southern Syria, encompassed by many Greek cities. But just as the strength of the Greeks lay, not in their decaying peninsula, but in their *diaspora*—their settlements all over the world—so the Jews were a ubiquitous nation, imbued at the same time with a strong affection for the one spiritual center of the race at Jerusalem. This gave them unity and power, which the Greeks did not possess. Philo, composing a very rhetorical letter as the missive sent by King Agrippa to Caligula, speaks of the spreading of the Jews as follows:

“ ‘This sacred city, the Holy Jerusalem, is the metropolis, not only of the one country Judea, but of most lands, by reason of the settlements she has sent out from time to time to the bordering lands of Egypt, Phenicia, and the rest of Syria; also into the more remote Pamphylia, Cilicia, most of Asia as far as the recesses of Pontus; likewise to Europe, Thesaly, Bœotia, Macedonia, Ætolia, Attica, Argos, Corinth, as well as most and the best parts of

the Peloponnese. And not only are the continents full of Jewish settlements, but so are the most famous of the islands,—Eubœa, Cyprus, Crete. I omit the lands beyond the Euphrates; for very nearly all Babylon, and whatever other satrapies have good land, have Jewish settlers. If, therefore, my fatherland obtain from you benefits, not one city, but tens of thousands are put under obligation, which are settled over every latitude of the habitable world—in Europe, Asia, Libya, in continents, islands, on seacoasts and far inland,' ”






## CHAPTER II

**The Jews of the Home-land During the Period Between  
the Testaments**



## CHAPTER II

### **The Jews of the Home-land During the Period Between the Testaments.**

N a prior chapter we ascertained the importance of the period of history between the Testaments. It is looked upon by the great populace of Christendom as a blank; an interval of dark shadows between the sunlit regions of the Old Testament and the New. We found it to be a period of great worth in the development of the Jewish religion. It got the world ready for the Gospel of the Messiah. We saw the throne of the world's empire change from the Orient to the Occident, and the Greek displace the Persian as the ruler of nations. This period was the period of Greek supremacy. The aim of Greek civilization was to assimilate mankind; and the agents which it employed were the stadium, the hippodrome, the gymnasium, the theater, and the schools of philosophy and art and architecture. Hellenism was the force which it used; and Hellenism is a great body of masterful ideas.

We followed the story of the Babylonian Jews

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

and the Jews of the **Dispersion**, and saw how Hebraism held its own in foreign lands against Hellenism and prepared the nations for the coming of Christ, the great Hebrew, the hero of the New Testament, the predestined and universal and final conqueror and ruler of the world. Jesus Christ is the finality of all history.

We ascertained the power of the Jewish Synagogue, and the influence of *the Septuagint*, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. These were the agents of Hebraism among the Dispersion, and they enabled the Foreign-Jews grandly to work out their mission in human history. All this is complete so far as it goes, and closes the first chapter of the period *between the Testaments*.

We now open the second chapter of this period. We leave the consideration of those Jews who made their home in the nations abroad and study the story of the Palestinian Jews—the Jews of the home-land.

Only a handful of Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity, and it is with these that we have to deal. When they returned to the Land of the Covenant, they centered around Jerusalem, the Holy City, and began at once to rebuild the Temple and the city. They were religious enthusiasts, and the work of God pros-

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

pered in their hands. Do not let us forget that their number was small, and that their territory was small. Their territory had not the extension it had in Christ's day. It was only a little section about Jerusalem with a radius of not more than ten or twelve miles. If we had gone, for example, through Galilee, in the fifth century before Christ, we would have seen in those sacred places familiar to us—Nazareth, Cana, Bethsaida, Capernaum—only heathen. Yet when Christ came, it was Galilee that gave him the majority of his apostles. The Palestinian Jews must have done something grand during the period *between the Testaments* to make this possible. As for the other section of Palestine—Samaria—it was a hindrance, and not a help; a jealous rival, and not a friend of the Jews of Jerusalem. An alliance with the Samaritans was considered a snare. The Book of Nehemiah brings this out. When Nehemiah came from the royal household of Babylon to Jerusalem as a reformer, he says that he found that a son of the high priest had married a daughter of the Samaritan magnate Sanballat. What did Nehemiah as a reformer do? Listen! "*Therefore I chased him from me.*" That widened the breach between the Jews and Samaritans. This offending and ostracized priest went to Samaria to

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

live; and there he organized the Samaritan religion, and built a temple as a center for worship on the Mountain of Gerizim. The two temples, the temple of Jerusalem and the temple of Mt. Gerizim, from that day to the day that the Master went through Samaria and talked at the well of Jacob with the woman of Samaria, were bitter rivals. The words of the Samaritan woman to Jesus set this into the light: "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, but ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." The center of worship was the bone of contention between them. The people wondered that Jesus talked with the woman, because "the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans."

There is no hope of help anywhere for the returned Jews who take up life anew at Jerusalem. They must be self-reliant and self-sufficient in building the Holy City and in taking the land for God.

In the study of the history of the Palestinian Jews during the period *between the Testaments*, it will aid us if we divide the period into two parts: 1st, *the Pre-Maccabean years*; and 2d, *the Maccabean and Post-Maccabean years*.

*The Pre-Maccabean years* run from Nehemiah 445 B. C. to the time of the Greek king of Syria, Antiochus Epiphanes, two hundred and



## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

seventy years later. There is a great dearth of historic material here. Even Herodotus, who tells all about the surrounding peoples, says nothing about the Jews whom these people surround. He does not even mention the Jews. All we can do is to follow the great world-movements of these years, in which the Jews were involved alike with hundreds of other peoples and races, and then conclude for ourselves as to results. At most there are only two outside helps here; and these are Josephus and the writers of the Old Testament Apocrypha.

To start with, we must note that there is a change in the administering of government in Jerusalem. Formerly *a king* of the house of David was the ruling power; now *the high priest* is the ruling power. The House of David has disappeared from sight; the Jewish state has only one chief—viz: the hereditary high priest. His is the royal family. The life of the people from this time on, until the time of the Maccabees, was ecclesiastical rather than political. The priests ruled by the Law of Moses. From the times of Ezra and Nehemiah, the Law was publicly read to the people. This was an effective policy. This formed public opinion. The priests held the people to the Law, and the people held the priests to the Law. This was a step toward

4873

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

democracy. It made Law king; and under King Law it made both priests and people guardians of all rights defined by the Law. It gave the people a voice as well as the priests. What is this but a tendency toward democracy?

There was something of Hellenism in this. Among the Greeks the people had a voice in the government. The Greek unit of government was the city, and in each city there was a senate composed of the leading citizens chosen from the people. Each city was autonomous, with jurisdiction over the surrounding district. Jerusalem, which was under the Greek supremacy, caught the Greek spirit; and the training of the people under the public reading of the Law was in harmony with the Greek spirit. Soon Jerusalem had a senate, known afterward as the Sanhedrin, and it took its place as one of the leading cities of the world. We have gained a point here. *We have learned the origin of the Jewish Sanhedrin.*

We have just said that the Jewish people were under the *Greek supremacy*. The Greeks ruled the world. It is natural now to ask, How did the supremacy conduct itself toward the dependencies? This is the answer to that question: The petty states were allowed to manage their own affairs in their own way, if only they were

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

prompt in paying the tribute levied upon them by the king's representatives. This tribute was farmed out to the highest bidders, who collected it from the states, and who were held responsible for it by the reigning court. Here is where the oppression came in. The oppressors were the men to whom the court farmed out the tribute, and who collected it from the people. There were graft and political corruption back here in the period *between the Testaments*.

There was another source of trouble in those Pre-Maccabean days. As the petty states were allowed to do pretty much as they pleased, so long as their tribute was paid, they often pleased to go to war with one another and to oppress one another. Hence Jerusalem often suffered from attacks by surrounding tribal states.

If we follow now for a little the history of the Greek supremacy, we shall get further light on the story of the Palestinian Jews of the period *between the Testaments*.

When Alexander the Great died, he died without leaving a capable heir to take his throne. There were many aspirants. After a tangle of wars, and half a century of revolutions, the contest for supremacy narrowed itself to two houses, each of which received about half of Alexander's kingdom. These houses were the house of Ptol-

emy of Egypt with Alexandria as its capital; and the House of Seleucid, or Antiochus of Asia, with Antioch of Syria as its extreme western capital. It had other capitals in the Orient.

The geographical position of Palestine on the highway of commerce and travel between the Orient and the Occident made it the desire of both houses, and provoked an endless series of devastating and depressing wars. It took a brave people to live through these times courageously, and keep a loyal faith in God. Backward and forward came the armies of these two Greek nations, from Egypt and from Asia, and often they met in the shock of battle right in the heart of Palestine. The House of Ptolemy after generations of warfare won something like a permanent supremacy, and for one hundred years Jerusalem was subject to the Egyptian Greeks. After a century the House of Seleucid won, and then Jerusalem was subject to that house. The one hundred years of subjection to the House of Ptolemy brings us through the *Pre-Maccabean* times up to the *Maccabean* times. It was during Israel's subjection to the House of Seleucid that the Maccabees asserted themselves. But of this afterward.

We are now interested in the Jews under the House of Ptolemy. What was the condition of

the Covenant People of God during this latter part of the period of the *Pre-Maccabean* era? It was both *bad and good*. Notice the bad! The priests under the rule of the Law gathered tithes from the people; and as these tithes grew, the priests became exceedingly rich. With riches came worldliness and a desire for lordship. This is almost always the case. They formed an aristocracy in Jerusalem. As the brilliant court of Ptolemy in Egypt always had open doors for bright and promising young men, many of the young Hebrews availed themselves of the golden and attractive opportunity and were found in the royal palace at Alexandria. We know how fascinating the enjoyment of royal honors is. Some of the chief families of Judea were corrupted, and were not more than half loyal to their own nation. If there be such a thing as half-treason they were guilty of that.

The craze for recognition struck even the family of the reigning priesthood. This was especially the case with one called Joseph, the son of Tobiah. Josephus, who was fond of telling stories of the way Jews hobnobbed with kings, gives us the story of this Joseph:

“The high priest of those days,” the story opens, “was a man whose one real concern was money. According to the practise of the realm,

the tribute of the Jewish state to the Egyptian government was paid in a lump sum of twenty silver talents annually by the high priest. Under the reign of this high priest, the payment fell into arrears. The Ptolemaic court threatened to turn Jerusalem into a military colony, but the high priest did not much care what happened to Jerusalem or the Jews, so long as he might keep his money. Of course the description of this villainous old man leads up to the hero of the story. He is the son of the high priest's sister, a young man called Joseph. He was highly esteemed by the people and worthy of admiration. When the alarm got abroad of the doom which hung over Jerusalem, Joseph came forward. He told his uncle he certainly ought to go to court to plead with the offended king. But the high priest's cynical indifference made all remonstrance hopeless. Then Joseph asked whether he might be sent himself as envoy; and when his uncle agreed readily enough, he at once set to work for the salvation of his people. He first of all laid himself out to give such an entertainment to the king's envoy at Jerusalem that the man went back to Alexandria loud in his praises. He had made friends at court.

“Then Joseph went down himself to Egypt with a train of animals, carrying splendid rai-

ment and silver plate and money to the amount 20,000 drachmas, which he had borrowed from his friends. It was at the moment when many of the principal men of both Syria and Phenicia were going up to Alexandria to bid for the right of farming the provincial taxes for the ensuing year. These rights were sold by the common custom of antiquity to the highest bidder; the tax-farmer contracted to pay a certain sum down to the government, and then kept for himself whatever he could raise from the taxes over and above. Joseph maintained a very humble appearance as he journeyed with these grandees; he allowed them to make merry over his poverty; they did not know what the bales upon his animals' backs contained.

“In Egypt he at once sought the king, and was introduced with enthusiasm by the late envoy to Jerusalem. The Jewish history now depicts proudly the terms of jovial familiarity on which Joseph associated with royalty. When the day came for the auction of the taxes, Joseph undertook to farm the taxes of the whole province at a figure double that bid by the magnates, whom he roundly accused of having made a ring to defraud the government. The king inquired of Joseph whom he could name as his guarantors for so large a sum, and Joseph immediately



named the king and queen themselves. Ptolemy was quite overcome by this sally of wit, and thought Joseph the most delightful young man he had ever met. The tender was accepted.

“When he entered upon the task of collecting the taxes, a time of horror came to the province. He robbed everybody alike, Jew and Gentile. The king gave him two thousand soldiers and left the cities at his mercy. In Ascalon, where his demands were opposed, he executed twenty of the chief men. The other cities in terror paid all he asked. He grew very rich. In his wealth he did not forget to pay court to the great. The king and queen of Egypt, and everyone who had influence at court, were kept in good humor by an unfailing stream of well-placed gifts.

“For two-and-twenty years,” the story says, “Joseph grew fabulously rich at the expense of the province. Often the figure of this assertive Jew was seen at the royal feasts in Alexandria. Once, while at court, becoming hypnotized by one of the dancing girls of the king, he laid plans to make her his own. On the night of his marriage, being under the influence of strong drink, his brother substituted his daughter as the bride. When Joseph became sober, a true attachment to this true-born daughter of Jerusalem was born

in him; and she was the mother of his son who succeeded him in the tax business."

We are taught by this story why it was that the tax-gatherers mentioned in the New Testament were men out of repute. This story explains their character and helps us to interpret them aright.

We have seen the bad. Let us turn to the good, for there was the good in those *Pre-Maccabean days*. There were loyal Jews then, who were true to their people and true to their covenant God. They were in the minority; but they grandly brought the true religion down to posterity, and to its climax in Him who fulfilled all the types, and all the promises, and all the ideals of Hebraism.

One of the books of the Old Testament Apocrypha serves us here. It opens a historical window into this era, through which we can look into the world of *Pre-Maccabean* Jerusalem. It shows us the good that reigned, and the principles that prevailed among the loyal ones. It is called the book of *Ecclesiasticus*. It belongs to the *Wisdom Literature* of those times. The author of the book was one named Jesus. The book is described as "*The Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach*." A great flood of knowledge is poured out, in this book by Ben-sira. He gives

us just what the pious Jew had before him; and what he believed; and the life he aimed to live. His book is an index of the mental habit; the circle of ideas which marked the solid central law-abiding mass of the citizens of Jerusalem. He lets us hear what sort of counsel the Hebrew youth got from the graybeards of the Holy City. *The book is a Jewish interior.* I touch lightly on this book now because it will come before us in our chapter upon "The Old Testament Apocrypha." In the fiftieth chapter of this book, this *Jesus of the Apocrypha* introduces us to Simeon the high priest, the son of Onias, as one of the typical saints of *Pre-Maccabean* Jerusalem, who kept the city true to God. He was known as Simon the Righteous. He not only looked after the religious life of the people; he looked also after their political life. He fortified the city; he repaired the Temple; he built the great reservoir. He made for himself a great name in sacred history and became the typical embodiment of the high priesthood in *Pre-Maccabean* days to the imagination of the later Jews. "It is given as his characteristic maxim that the three pillars upon which the world rests are the Law, the Holy Ritual, and Loving-kindness." Of Simeon, the Talmud and the Mishnah say: "In his days the red cord on

the head of the scape-goat turned white: a symbol of the national sins put away. The lamps in the Temple never went out; and the flame on the altar burnt always clear and strong." (Derenbourg *Histoire et Geog de la Palestine*, p. 48.) His presence in Israel was the assurance of the people's peace.

Let me quote from the Old Testament Apocrypha, and thus present this typical and holy man *ex cathedra*. (Ecclesiasticus 50: 5.)

How glorious was he when the people gathered round  
him

At his coming out of the sanctuary!

He was as the morning star in the midst of a cloud:  
And as the moon at the full.

He was as the sun shining upon the Temple of the  
Most High:

And as the rainbow giving light in clouds of glory.

When he took up the robe of glory,

And put on the perfection of exaltation:

In the ascent of the Holy Altar,

He made glorious the precinct of the sanctuary.

And when he received the portions out of the priests'  
hands,

Himself also standing by the hearth of the altar,

His brethren as a garland round about him;  
He was as a young cedar in Libanus.  
And all the sons of Aaron in their glory  
Were round about him as palm-trees.

When he stretched out his hand to the cup  
And poured of the blood of the grape,  
He poured out at the foot of the altar  
A sweet-smelling savor unto the Most High, the King  
of all.

Then shouted the sons of Aaron,  
Then sounded the silver trumpets;  
And made a great noise to be heard  
For a remembrance before the Most High.

Then all the people hasted together, hasted  
And fell down upon the earth on their faces  
To worship their Lord, the Almighty, God Most High.

The singers also praised Him with their voices;  
In the whole house was there made sweet melody.  
And the people besought the Lord Most High,  
In prayer before Him that is merciful,  
Till the worship of the Lord should be ended:  
And so they accomplished His service.  
Then he went down, and lifted up his hands

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

Over the whole congregation of the children of Israel,  
To give blessing unto the Lord with his lips;  
And to glory in his name.

And he bowed in worship the second time  
To declare the blessing from the Most High:

“And now bless ye the God of all,  
Which everywhere doeth great things.  
Which exalteth our days from the womb  
And dealeth with us according to His mercy.  
May He grant us joyfulness of heart,  
And that peace may be in our days in Israel for the  
days of eternity:  
To intrust His mercy with us.  
And let Him deliver us in His time.”

This is nothing short of the magnificent. It is  
a good ending of our study of the *Pre-Macca-  
bean* times.

Having studied the *Pre-Maccabean years* of  
the Palestinian Jews under the Ptolemaic su-  
premacy, we now give ourselves to the study of  
those years known as *the Maccabean and Post-  
Maccabean years*.

They were the years which the Palestinian

Jews spent under the Seleucid and Roman supremacies. The chief ruler of the House of Seleucid, who fills our eye here, is Antiochus Epiphanes, 175 B. C. When he came to the throne at Antioch, Hellenism had made large inroads into Jewish society. This was the result of the large emoluments obtained by wealthy Jews at the Court of Antioch. Jerusalem was more and more abandoning her exclusiveness. Even in Jerusalem, Greek costumes were worn by young Jews of the aristocracy and Greek manners were assumed.

The following piece of history from the Old Testament Apocrypha throws light upon this immediate period :

“But when Seleucus was deceased, and Antiochus, who was called Epiphanes, succeeded to the kingdom, *Jason* the brother of Onias supplanted his brother in the high priesthood, having promised unto the king at an audience three hundred and threescore talents of silver, and out of another fund eighty talents; and besides this, he undertook to assign a hundred and fifty more, *if it might be allowed him through the king's authority to set him up a Greek place of exercise and form a body of youths to be trained therein*, and to register the inhabitants of Jerusalem as citizens of Antioch. And when the



## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

king had given assent, and he had gotten possession of the office, he forthwith brought over them of his own race to the Greek fashion. And setting aside the royal ordinances of special favor to the Jews, granted by the means of John the father of Eupolemus, who went on the embassy to the Romans for friendship and alliance, and seeking to overthrow the lawful modes of life, he brought in new customs forbidden by the law; for he eagerly established a Greek place of exercise under the citadel itself, and caused the noblest of the young men to wear the Greek cap. And thus there was an extreme of Greek fashions, and an advance of an alien religion, by reason of the exceeding profaneness of Jason, that ungodly man and no high priest; so that the priests had no more any zeal for the service of the altar, but despising the sanctuary and neglecting the sacrifices, they hastened to enjoy that which was unlawfully provided in the palaestra, after the summons of the discus, making of no account the honors of their fathers, and thinking the glories of the Greeks best of all." (Second Maccabees 4:7-16.)

Thus it was on the one hand. On the other hand this treason in influential quarters—i. e., among the nobility—provoked a reaction in other circles. Those of the people who loved the

good old ways closed their ranks in rigid opposition. They formed themselves into a religious and state party known as "the Hasidim"—"the godly." This party developed in the course of time into a well-known sect, the Pharisees. The Pharisees were the party of the people, just as the Sadducees were the party of the aristocracy.

Thus things were when Antiochus Epiphanes came to the throne of the House of Seleucid. He was a man of reckless vehemence; *vehemence was his temperament*. His surname was "Epiphanes"—"God made manifest." Popular wit changed it to "Epimanes," "the madman." Popular wit was keen and true. As Antiochus was an intense Hellenist, he saw in his kingdom a field in which to operate as the crowned apostle of Hellenism. As Jerusalem seemed to have some Hellenistic tendencies, he began his work of proselytizing there. He put an evil man over Jerusalem. The theater and the gymnasium were introduced. He entered the Temple and robbed it of all its treasures. He appropriated the golden altar, and the golden candlesticks, and the golden censers, and the golden cups to pour withal; and scaled off the adorning gold which was on the face of the Temple. He transformed the Holy City into a Greek garrison, and then

turned the sacred Temple of Jehovah into a temple of Olympian Zeus. The services of the Temple were recast in Greek forms, with an image of a god which bore the features of Antiochus himself. In the sacred precincts he slaughtered swine, and sprinkled the blood on everything counted holy. The two Maccabean Psalms in the Hebrew Psalter, the 74th and 79th, reflect the horrors of the situation. It is not strange that, amid these fearful calamities; when imagination was at full tension and hearts were cloven with anxiety, portents are reported. In 2 Macc. 5:5-10 we read: "Through all the city, for the space almost of forty days, there were seen horsemen galloping through the air, and squadrons of cavalry in array."

A fearful persecution was now decreed by Antiochus. All sacred books were destroyed, and merely to possess a copy of God's Law was declared to be a capital offense. Sabbath-keeping, circumcision, and all Mosaic ordinances, were forbidden on the pain of death. The people were compelled to eat the flesh of swine. Instead of the Feast of Tabernacles, Antiochus instituted Bacchanalian processions; and old and grave Israelites were compelled to join the processions wearing joy-wreaths around their heads. Commissioners were instructed to

destroy Judaism root and branch; and to insist that all the inhabitants of Palestine duly conform to pagan rites.

Jewish tradition tells proudly of men who bravely died for their ancestral faiths—of a scribe ninety years of age, who, stript of clothes but wrapt in the dignity of old age and piety, passed through death to the robes of white; and of seven brothers who bore the fearful torments of the rack and wheel and scourge and flame rather than break the Law, while their mother stood by and encouraged them to endure. “These were the vanguard of the noble army of martyrs.”

But let us cheer up! *The Maccabees are coming!* Antiochus had overreached himself. Out in one of the villages an aged priest, Mattathias, proudly refused to sacrifice to the Greek gods; slew a renegade Jew; struck down the royal commissioner; and with his five sons fled to the mountain fortresses. This was the fruitful beginning of a revolt. Events had come to so horrible a pass, that there was no way but to take the sword and to look to God for success. This handful of brave men drew others around them; and the insurgents went through the country destroying heathen altars, slaying apostates, reviving Jewish rites, and reopening Synagogues.

This movement put a new life into the Jewish nation. It was a resurrection from the dead. But Mattathias was an old, old man, and the time came for him to die. Before going he saw to it that the new cause should not die. His death-bed scene, as pictured in the First Book of the Maccabees, second chapter, is a most touching scene. It is even highly dramatic. He called his friends and family about him, and put them under solemn obligation to God and country. He told what God had been to Israel, and thus inspired faith; and then he recounted what the heroes of the nation under their faith in God had done, and thus inspired courage. Then he appointed Judas Maccabeus, his son, to be the leader of the great reformation which he had inaugurated, when he had gone up to God. He especially addrest his sons. Thus he spoke: "As for Judas Maccabeus, he hath been mighty and strong even from his youth up; let him be your captain, and fight the battle of the people. Take also unto you all those that observe the law, and avenge ye the wrong of your people. Recompense fully the heathen, and take heed to the commandments of the law." So he blest them and was gathered to his fathers. He died in the hundred and forty-sixth year of his life, and his sons buried him in the sepulcher of his

fathers at Modin; and all Israel made great lamentation for him." (1 Macc. 2:66-70.)

His son, Judas Maccabeus, who succeeded to the leadership, was one of the bravest men that ever lived. Under him "The Lion of the Tribe of Judah" once more lifted its head. Maccabeus means *the hammer of his foes*. He was the Jewish ideal of "the happy warrior," uniting military skill with absolute confidence in God.

The story of the House of the Maccabees, and its ascendancy to complete power, is told with the greatest fulness by two of the books of the Old Testament Apocrypha—viz: First and Second Books of the Maccabees. The story as told by these Apocryphal books is twofold. The first of these books, First Maccabees, contains a record of priceless worth written soon after the events and drawn largely from the author's personal knowledge and recollection. Present-day scholars are unanimous in appraising it as an essentially trustworthy document in which facts are allowed to speak for themselves. It was written in Hebrew and by a Sadducee whose name is now unknown.

The Second Book of Maccabees covers the same ground as its predecessor, and is supplementary thereto. It was written later and in the Greek, and by an author of Pharisaic pro-

clivities, who had a great fondness for the marvelous. There are in it astounding miracles concerning which the former book is silent. For example, Judas is surrounded by angelic champions. Sometimes his little band is led by a mystic horseman in white; and often in the thick of a battle five splendid horsemen appear suddenly, as if from heaven. They were the guardian angels of the five gallant brothers. This Second Book was composed for edification according to the taste of the times. When they reached their supremacy, nothing was considered as too great or marvelous to be predicated of the Maccabees. They were all of them, John, and Simon, and Judas, and Eleazer, and Jonathan, men of visions and exploits. *They made a new nation of Israel.* They brought it back to a harmonious devotion to the worship of Jehovah. With them it was war to the hilt of the sword against conquering paganism. They gave the nation a new intensity of piety. When they reached their supremacy, Israel not only had a priest *but a king also.* They brought back the throne to Israel. For sixty-five years Israel was an independent nation; it had a king of its own, and was subject to no one. All this was the doing of the Maccabees. This continued until the Romans became the world-power, in place of the Greeks, and conquered Palestine.



We have space here for only a fragmentary story of the Maccabees. But this will be sufficient to give us an idea of the *period between the Testaments*.

When Judas was appointed by his dying father the head of the Maccabean revolt, six thousand men, who preferred death to unfaithfulness, rallied around him. He scattered the first Syrian army that was sent against him; and then a second army. "From mighty kings he took the spoil." Exasperated by the failure of two armies, Antiochus sent a third army of sixty thousand to hunt him down. Terror spread among his ranks and many fell away. Judas, seeing this, followed the example of Gideon and winnowed his forces. He called to all cowards: "*Fall out of line.*" A gallant band of three thousand remained. With these he threw himself one night upon the sixty thousand of Antiochus. Nothing could resist the attack. The Syrians fled in panic through the whole night, while the victors sang Psalm 136—the national anthem of their race—enumerating the never-ending mercies of their God. The way now lay open for Judas to enter Jerusalem. Entering the Holy City he found the Temple in ruins. Then those warriors who had destroyed three armies, fell on their faces, threw dust on

their heads, and wept aloud. They restored all that could be restored and dedicated the Temple anew.

This is a sample of the career of Judas which he closed one day on the battle-field. When he died he was canonized by the popular voice. He had lifted Judea out of the dust. Displaying a patriotism, a generalship, and a heroism of which his race will evermore be proud, he rendered a yet more signal service, for he inspired his countrymen with a new sense of their religion.

When Judas died he was succeeded by his brothers, one after another, until the original five had joined their father in the ranks above. Then the sons of the five took up the cause of Israel, and became kings and priests among the Covenant People of God, until the House of the Maccabees had ascended to supremacy, and then descended and finished its course. It was during the leadership of this House that the territory of the Palestinian Jews was enlarged until it took in the three divisions which we find at the coming of the Christ—viz: Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. It was during this era that the different religious sects arose, which played their part in the days of the Master.

I must stop at this point to mention one agency which was at work during the Maccabean

times, sustaining and instructing and informing the faith, and adding courage to the Palestinian Jews. *I mean the Book of Enoch.* This was an influence also during what remained of the *period between the Testaments* after the days of the Maccabees—i. e., during the Roman supremacy under which Palestine came. This is a remarkable book. In the earliest Christian literature we find it highly spoken of. The fathers even quote it as scripture; Jude, the writer of one of the Epistles of the New Testament, also quoted from it. It told in shaping his faith. This book was lost. For a long time it entirely disappeared. But about a hundred years ago an adventurous Scot by the name of Bruce traveling in Abyssinia picked up and brought home a book in the Ethiopic language which when submitted to a learned examination turned out to be this lost *Book of Enoch*. The story of its finding, and an analysis of its contents, are given by Dr. James Stalker of Glasgow in one of his popular lectures on *The Background of the Life of Christ*. It is a very long book. It has seventy chapters and more. It is probably a number of books glued together. It dates back two centuries before Christ. The writer has been called the “Hebrew Dante.” His wanderings through the remote places of the

universe bear some resemblance to Dante's wanderings in *The Inferno*, *The Purgatorio*, and *The Paradiso*. The book opens: "The words of the blessing of Enoch, how he blest the elect and the righteous; who were to exist in the time of trouble, rejecting all the wicked and ungodly. Enoch, a righteous man who was with God, answered and spake, while his eyes were open and while he saw a holy vision in the heavens. Thus the angels showed me the things that will take place at a distant period on account of the Elect."

The book you see is an apocalypse. You can see also that it was just fitted for times like those we have been studying. According to a method, characteristics of apocalyptic writings, the developments of history are represented by a procession of animals, in which Israel is a race of white sheep; and the nations who oppress them are lions, bears, eagles. The part of the book which especially applies to these last times of the Hebrews is that known as the *Similitudes*. Its peculiar feature is this: The Day of Judgment is coming, and this will be the day of deliverance and reward for those who suffer for God. The Lord's Anointed, the Son of David, the Righteous, the Elect One, the Mystic Son of Man, the Promised Hebrew Messiah, the Light

of the Gentiles, will bring that day. And He is on the way. The signs of His coming are already visible and unmistakable. Then what? Why this: "In the new heaven and the new earth the righteous will form a glorious church about the Holy person of the Son of Man." But what of those who die before he comes? Listen! "The spirits of those of you who die in righteousness will live and rejoice and be glad. Your spirits will not perish, but your memorial will be before the face of the Great One unto all generations of the world." "Be hopeful; for aforetime ye were put to shame through ills and afflictions; but soon ye will shine and will be seen, and the portals of heaven will be opened unto you." You see where the doctrine of immortality, which so shines in the opening of the New Testament, comes from; and you see also who helped to create the expectation of the immediate coming of the Messiah which filled the Jewish atmosphere; and which was voiced by the preaching of John the Baptist in the first pages of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There is a great resemblance between the statements of the *Book of Enoch* and the utterances of the New Testament; and even the utterances of the Master Himself. It was the *Book of Enoch* that put the Messianic things into the Hebrew atmosphere

and kept them within the vision of the people. It was the immediate preparation for the Christ and the Kingdom which He preached.

One more section of history! With the fall of the House of the Maccabees came the ascendancy and supremacy of the great world-power, Rome. In the year 63 B. C. Pompey entered Syria with the Roman army. He conquered Palestine and made it tributary. He did not however disturb the temple nor the religious life of the Jews. The Jews were granted large liberties; yet at times under the Romans there were great sufferings. Cassius, whose dagger was driven into the heart of the great Cæsar, sold thirty thousand of the Jews as slaves to cruel taskmasters. Those were the days of the Roman wars; and of the Roman men, Cæsar, and Antony, and Brutus, and Cassius—the men and the events out of which Shakespeare builds his great historical dramas and educational plays. The one ruler who figures most largely now is the Idumean Herod, whom Antony made king of Judea. He was not a Jew, but he was closely allied to the Jews. One of his wives was a daughter of the House of the Maccabees, the stately and beautiful Mariamne. But he was jealous of her sons—his sons, too—so he murdered both her and them. They were the last

of the Maccabees; and in their death that House went out of existence.

Herod did many good things, however, for the Jews. It was he who rebuilt the Temple on the scale of a new magnificence. "The workmen on the new Temple were all priests who had been specially trained." The scale of grandeur was such that it became a proverb, "He that hath not seen Herod's Temple hath seen nothing beautiful." *Its style of architecture bore witness to the prevailing Greek culture.* The Master Himself taught in its costly courts. "Then answered the Jews and said unto Him: 'Forty and six years was this Temple in building, and wilt Thou rear it up in three days?' " "Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here!" The Jews were proud of Herod's Temple. When Herod died in the year 5 B. C. Cæsar divided Palestine among Archelaus, Herod Antipas (he who put John the Baptist to death), and Philip.

The blank between the Two Testaments is filled. We are ready now for the Christ, and the Cross, and the New Testament with its grand finalities, its glorious gospel, its reign of the Holy Spirit, its Golden Age, its City of God coming down out of heaven to earth, and the realization of the things prepared by God for



## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

His own people; which are symbolized by the gold and precious stones and harps and crowns of its Apocalypse. These are certainties because of the immanence of God in human destiny.

### POSTLUDE

In a further study of the Interbiblical period, the reader will be interested and helped by two recent publications: (1) *The Bible as English Literature* (1906); (2) *The Silver Age of the Greek World* (1906). Both of these books should have a place in the library of every Bible student.

*The Bible as English Literature* has for its author J. H. Gardiner, Professor of English in Harvard University. Professor Gardiner proves himself in every way a man abreast of the times. His volume is based on the conclusions of the latest Biblical scholarship. It utilizes the very best of the latest criticism of our age. It is essentially constructive, and commends itself by its naturalism. It is a genuine thesaurus of instructive facts. *The Bible as English Literature* is certainly a most fascinating book; and it makes *the Book of Books* fasci-

nating. It gives it a new life, and an added power.

The part of Professor Gardiner's book which especially bears upon the subject we have in hand is the *Introduction*. Here he succinctly tells the story of the construction of the Bible, how it was edited and reedited; and then gives the chronological order of the different books of the Bible. In doing this he sets before the reader a bird's-eye view of the whole history of the Covenant People of God. I have tried to make an excerpt from this *Introduction*, in order to let the author illustrate and represent himself; but I have failed. His *Introduction* is a monograph and so closely knit together in all its parts and so essentially one, that it will not admit of being broken up into sample parcels. It must be read as a whole. I would as soon think of cutting into strips the canvas of one of Meissonier's masterpieces to illustrate Meissonier's work, as think of breaking up the *Introduction* to Professor Gardiner's *The Bible as English Literature* into excerpts that I might illustrate Professor Gardiner's work. The *Introduction* is his masterpiece, and must be read in its entirety.

*The Silver Age of the Greek World* has for its author John Pentland Mahaffy, Professor of

Ancient History in the University of Dublin. This book shows that Professor Mahaffy is in love with his subject, and is an enthusiastic all-around scholar of Hellenism. He uses the very best of helps in his work. He paints from the palettes of Dion Chrysostom and Plutarch. These two Greek scholars have mixed the colors for him. In painting, the palette is no secondary thing. One of Whistler's famous sayings is: "The picture is practically finished on the palette"—i. e., when the paints are mixed on the palette, you have before you the representative and prevailing tone of the picture; the lights and the shades, and the true harmony of all its colors. While Professor Mahaffy paints from the palettes of Dion Chrysostom and Plutarch he paints well. He so puts his own genius into his picture that no one thinks of calling it second-hand brilliance.

The book covers three centuries in all: the first and second centuries B. C. and the first century A. D. Altho the book has for its subject *The Silver Age of the Greek Life*, it is full of the radiance of "The Golden Age" of Greek Life. That age, however, has gone. Professor Mahaffy treats of it in a former book, *Greek Life and Thought*. The best that *The Silver Age* can do is to imitate "The Golden Age." It does not

create, and it does not originate; it only makes copies. It only reproduces the ancient masterpieces. There is no Homer in it. There is no Parthenon of Athens in it. These exist only as a legacy.

In this Silver Age Professor Mahaffy tells us was written the famous Greek tract *On The Sublime*, which maintains its influence as a standard in art even to this day. After describing this writing, and others which influenced the people, Professor Mahaffy gives us this page, which bears on the *period between the Testaments*:

“There was, indeed, another literary work going on during this century of the first magnitude, as the result has amply proved; but it was in a remote corner of Hellenism, unknown, moreover, to the most learned and curious of the Greeks, to Dion and to Plutarch. For there, where Hellenism had to struggle with the force and ability of Judaism, teaching and learning with the interest of hate and the relish of antagonism—there, among the common people, were springing up those books on the life of Jesus which touch the hearts of men with a directness and force very foreign to the flowery and rhetorical arguments of a Philo or a Josephus. The simplicity, the natural vigor, the unconscious

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

picturesqueness in these narratives are so remarkable that, even had they never laid any claim to inspiration, sound judges must have condoned their faulty grammar and poor vocabulary, and acknowledged in them at least the voice of honest men speaking from the heart, and thus endowed with one of the highest literary qualities. Whether these writers were indeed 'Israelites' or not, they were, as writers, 'without guile'; and the fact that they all chose Greek for their medium has been one great cause of the persistence of Greek studies to this day.

"The slow recognition of these books—for their influence is first recognized, and only indirectly, in the correspondence of Pliny, if, indeed, the movement he reports did not result from mere preaching—is a feature well worthy of our notice. Whether they were kept secret from the cavils of the Greeks we know not; but considering the principles openly asserted in those days, considering the slavish adherence to the great Attic models, what was more obvious, what more certain, than that such pictures as the opening scenes of St. Luke's Gospel or the Sermon on the Mount would be despised by the critics as the work of late-learning and self-taught people, who knew nothing of the art of

expression or of the laws of composition? And yet the world has judged differently: the idyll of Bethlehem lives, while the idyll of Eubœa lies buried in Dion; Herod the tyrant lives, while as the polished Hellenist he is forgotten; the metaphors on the mount, the parables by the way, have outlived the paradoxes of the Stoic, the rhetoric of the schools.

“Yet as the vehicle of this new doctrine, this new exposition, was Greek; so it borrowed from Hellenism much of its tone, of its terminology, of its subtler thinking. Let no man imagine that the Christian faith owes nothing, or even little, to the Greeks. ‘The fulness of the time’ for the Gospel came when Greek conquered Jew and Jew conquered Greek, and the world inherited the legacy of their struggle through Roman hands.”

### CHAPTER III

**The Old Testament Apocrypha as the Book of the  
Period Between the Testaments**





## CHAPTER III

### The Old Testament Apocrypha as the Book of the Period Be- tween the Testaments.



HERE is no subject more fascinating than the *Sacred Books* of antiquity. They enshrine the very gods. The gods can inhabit a book as really as a temple. A book can be divine, through the indwelling of deity, as much as a man can be. The One Living and True God can reveal Himself through theophanic words as truly and as vividly as through the fire of the flashing Shekinah above the Tabernacle of Israel. God is immanent in the Bible. His laws are there; His thoughts are there; His purposes are there; His providences are there; yes, He himself is there. If the Bible be the Book of God, we have God Himself: and through His book we can deal directly with Him. If this be so, it makes every question pertaining to the Bible all-important. A divine book is certainly a divine treasure.

The great power of the Bible as the Book of God is this: it is constantly being reedited and reissued. This keeps it living and up to date. How is it being reedited and reissued? By and

through human experience. Yonder Christian man on the bed of suffering, his faith holding on to God, his life purified by the furnace of affliction, is a twentieth century edition of the Book of Job. The Chinese martyrs of the Boxer uprising is the Book of Daniel, with its lion's den and its furnace of fire heated seven times. The story of Joan of Arc is that part of the Book of Judges which tells of the heroism of Deborah, translated into French life.

Is the Canon of Scripture closed? It will never be closed. When God's Book ceases to be rewritten and reedited and enlarged, when it is allowed to exist only in a dead language, it will itself become dead. Human experience rewrites it and reedit it.

But the Bible is rewritten and reedited in another way. Every fresh translation of it rewrites and reedit it. The late revision of the Bible was, in a limited sense, a reopening of the question of canonicity. The version of the revision is not precisely the same as what is known as the Authorized Version. Certain phrases and verses and sections have been wholly eliminated from the revision; certain words have been changed. All this has been done by the decree of modern scholarship. Modern scholarship, after comparing ancient version with ancient ver-

sion, and part of scripture with part of scripture, and the study of cognate languages, and the analysis of the Bible itself, ordered these changes; and the revisers obeyed. There are more comparisons going on, and there are more analyses in process; and there are more orders ahead, commanding more omissions and more changes in the interest of the Book which the scholars of the future will obey. The consensus of modern scholarship is the arbiter here; and it will always continue to be the arbiter. This is going to keep the Book alive and fresh and up to date; this is going to secure a true and scientific interpretation of the Book; this is going to continue the leadership of the Bible in the world of mankind.

But it is not with the books, which are universally admitted into the Canon of Scripture, that we have now to deal; it is with certain books against whose claims to canonicity certain branches of the Christian Church have placed an interrogation point—viz: the books of *the Old Testament Apocrypha*. Of these books Biblical scholars say: They have merit, but they have not *canonical* merit. The names of these disputed books are as follows: First and Second Esdras; Tobit; Judith; the Remainder (or conclusion) of Esther; The Wisdom of Solomon; Ec-

clesiasticus; Baruch, with the Epistle of Jeremiah; The Song of the Three Holy Children; The History of Susanna; The Prayer of Manasses; First and Second Maccabees. There are many such Apocryphal books. Irenæus, in one of his works, says: "There is an unspeakable quantity of Apocryphal writings." This is true relative to both of the Testaments. The sixty-six canonical books of the Old and New Testaments are picked books. The choice was made from many. For example, there are fourteen books in the Old Testament Apocrypha. These do not exhaust the panel of that period. There are fourteen other books named in the Old Testament which have been wholly lost. They may have been lost in the exigencies attending the Babylonian captivity; or, they may have been destroyed by the enemies of the worship of Jehovah. We are told by history that when Antiochus Epiphanes tried to annihilate the Jewish religion and make *Hebraism* over into *Hellenism*, not only did he desecrate the Holy Temple of Jerusalem and turn it into the Temple of the Olympian Zeus, but he also destroyed all the Sacred Writings of the Jews upon which he could lay hands. Besides the books contained in the list of the Old Testament Apocrypha, there are extant such books as these: *The Book*

of Jubilees, *The Assumption of Moses*, *The Psalter of Solomon*, and *The Book of Enoch*. *The Book of Enoch*, which is quite an extensive writing, is a Book of books. It is something like the book of Homer. It was composed in somewhat the same way that the book of Homer was. Homer's poems are due to many pens. They were rewritten, and copied, and reedited, and touched up by many scribes. That was the way of the world, in dealing with all books, back in antiquity. Doubtless the poet, who gave them their final unity, took great liberties of excision and of interpolation. The sense of literary property in the year 1907 A. D. did not obtain back in the year 800 B. C. Every ancient book of the remote past stands for many pens. And what matters this? Absolutely nothing. The finals are everything. The book, as it now is, is everything. Every book must stand or fall in the judgment according to what it is.

I have spoken of the number of books outside of the Old Testament canon; there are as many books outside of the New Testament canon, and even more. The New Testament has an Apocrypha of its own. It consists of twenty-four books—only three less than the number of the books in the New Testament itself. Besides the twenty-four New Testament Apocryphal books, my copy of

the New Testament Apocrypha gives the names of seventy other Apocryphal writings not now extant. The names of these have been gathered from the writers of the first four centuries of Christ; these non-extant works are mentioned and referred to in their writings. Now what is the sum and substance of all this? Why this: *The books in our Bible are the survival of the fittest. Our Bible is a sifted book.*

In taking up the study of the Old Testament Apocrypha we have two reasons for so doing: First, *because broad scholarship demands it*; and secondly, *because it is part of the literature of the Covenant People of God, through whom God in an especial way revealed Himself to mankind.* Broad scholarship demands a knowledge of the Old Testament Apocrypha. Out of it have grown maxims, and proverbs, and pictures, and poems, and dramas, and oratorios and great hymns. Shakespeare came to the Apocrypha for his striking similes; and Ruskin for his art-critiques; and Handel tuned his harp here, and gave the world his oratorio *Judas Maccabeus*. It was here that Wesley got his inspiration for that hymn of his which the church will never let die, *Jesus, Lover of My Soul*. The Apocrypha is the first sacred writing of the world, that we know of, that gives God the name *Lover of Souls*.



But this hymn of Wesley is not the only noted hymn for which the Christian Church is indebted to the Apocrypha. *The Song of the Three Children*, one of the short books of the Apocrypha, exists now in the form of that hymn which is known as the *Benedicite*. It holds an honored place in all the liturgies of Christendom. Besides this, another of the books of the Apocrypha, *Ecclesiasticus*, furnishes the church with that splendid hymn of the Germans, *Now Thank We All Our God*. It is simply Ecclesiasticus 50 : 22-24. St. Bernard of Clairvaux's great hymn, *Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee*, is nothing other than a Christian adaptation of Ecclesiasticus, chapter 24. St. Bernard got his hymn here.

It was here in the Old Testament Apocrypha that Milton got the names of the angels who live in his immortal works. There is no book to which *angelology* is so indebted. It was here that the artist of Florence got the subjects of his famous painting *Judith and Holofernes*.

The literary references made to the Apocrypha in the libraries of the world, and the literary and artistic uses made of it by the scholars and thinkers of the world, are reasons why we should study it and know it. It becomes a scholar to be posted in all that has interested scholars, and in

sources from which scholars have drawn. A thorough knowledge of it introduces one into fellowship with Shakespeare, and Milton, and Defoe, and Charles Kingsley, and George Eliot, and Ruskin, and Addison, and St. Bernard, and John Bunyan: for these all used it. A knowledge of it makes their pages the more interesting. If you know nothing of the Old Testament Apocrypha there will be many blanks in their writings.

The story of John Bunyan and the Apocrypha is interesting just here. It had a place in his life. He himself tells the story in his autobiography, *Grace Abounding*. He was in great gloom. He was seeking light and comfort. All at once there flashed into his mind these words: "Look at the generations of old and see: did ever any trust in the Lord and was confounded?" He said: "These are God's words; they are just what I need. I will look no farther. I will simply trust God." And he did; and the gloom left him, and his soul had great peace. He had heard these words in church, and supposed that they were from Holy Writ. But searching the Bible he could not find them. One day he stumbled on them in the Apocrypha. They were in the eleventh chapter of Ecclesiasticus. He says: "This at the first did somewhat daunt me. But because by this time I had got more experience

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

of the love and kindness of God, it troubled me the less; especially when I considered that tho it were not in those books that were called Holy and Canonical, yet forasmuch as this sentence was the sum and substance of many of the promises, it was my duty to take the comfort of it; and I bless God for that word, for it was of God to me; that word doth still shine before my face.”

In the item of scholarship both broadness and thoroughness require us to have a knowledge of the Old Testament Apocrypha, if we are to deal knowingly with the New Testament, the Book of Authority in our religion. There are in the Apocrypha *preludings* of the high faith and teaching of the New Testament. While the Apocrypha is not directly quoted in the New Testament, yet there are many examples of *parallelisms* between the two, which abundantly show that the writers of the New Testament were fully acquainted with the Apocrypha and found it helpful. These parallelisms are found in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in the writings of James, and Paul, and John. In the doctrine of *Divine Wisdom*, as contained in the Apocrypha, there are many premonitions of the Fourth Gospel. This is seen by comparing the Gospel of John 1:1-14 with the *Wisdom of Solomon*, 7th

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

and 9th chapters inclusive. Doctor Westcott calls attention to the fact that the writer of the Epistle to the Ephesians was helped in describing the Christian's armor, Ep. 6:13-17, by *Wisdom*, 5:18-20. The Christian's armor is something like the armor of God Himself. The armor of God is thus described:

But the righteous live for ever,  
And in the Lord is their reward,  
And the care for them with the Most High.  
Therefore shall they receive the crown of royal dignity  
And the diadem of beauty from the Lord's hand;  
Because with his right hand shall he cover them,  
And with his arm shall he shield them.  
He shall take his jealousy as complete armor,  
And shall make the whole creation  
His weapons for vengeance on his enemies:  
He shall put on righteousness as a breastplate,  
And shall array himself with judgment unfeigned as  
with a helmet;  
He shall take holiness as an invincible shield,  
And he shall sharpen stern wrath for a sword:  
And the world shall go forth with him to fight against  
his insensate foes.  
Shafts of lightning shall fly with true aim,  
And from the clouds, as from a well-drawn bow, shall  
they leap to the mark.

*Wisdom 5:15-22.*

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

Dean Plumtree was so struck with the coincidences of *Wisdom* with the Epistle to the Hebrews that he suggested identity of authorship—possibly Apollos. He wrote the first book before he became a Christian, and the second book after he became a Christian. Dean Plumtree says: "It is marvelous how the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews borrowed from *Wisdom* of the Apocrypha those splendid phrases by which he describes the Master as 'The brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person.' He took these from *Wisdom* 7:26, and bodily applied them to Jesus Christ, claiming that they were verified to the full in Him." *Wisdom* 7:26 reads:

Wisdom is a breath of the power of God,  
And a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty;  
Therefore can nothing defiled find entrance into her.  
For she is an effulgence from everlasting light,  
And an unspotted mirror of the working of God,  
And an image of his goodness.

Dean Plumtree, in his Cambridge Commentary on St. James, has worked out an interesting series of coincidences of expressions of no less than sixteen in number between *St. James' Epistle* and the book of *Ecclesiasticus*. One example

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

will stand in lieu of the whole of Dean Plumtree's series. *James* 1:19: "Wherefore my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." *Ecclesiasticus* 5:11: "Be swift to hear, and let thy life be sincere, and with patience give answer."

Even the Golden Rule of the New Testament is here in germ-form; if not indeed somewhat grown. *Tobit* 4:15 reads: "Do to no man what thou hatest." That is one form of the Golden Rule. It is here also in another form. *Ecclesiasticus* 31:15: "Consider thy neighbor's liking by thine own." The gold was in the Apocrypha in this double quantity waiting to be purified and to be recast by the Master into that form of beauty and positiveness which he gave it, and which makes it a universal power: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." (Matt. 7:12.)

/ We should know *the Apocrypha* because it is part of the literature of the Covenant People of God through whom God in an especial way has revealed Himself to mankind. It contains the Interbiblical History of the Jews. It gives us the *period between the Testaments*. It tells of the clash between Hellenism and Hebraism during the post-exilic centuries, and how Hebraism

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

grandly held its own until the coming of Christ, the great world-teacher who was to supersede Socrates and Plato and Aristotle and the scholars of the classic ages. The Apocrypha is decidedly the most famous part of the literature belonging to the centuries between Malachi and Matthew. Without it these centuries would be a great blank. It portrays both the inner and the outer life of the Messianic people during the Interbiblical period. Without it we would know nothing of the price paid for the transmission of the cause of God from the Old dispensation to the New. We would know nothing of the heroics of the House of the Maccabees, the champions of the Law; nor of the loyal reign of the priesthood; nor of the *Pre-* and *Post-Maccabean* periods; nor of the protection of the altar. We would know nothing of the great sacrifices made by the martyrs, who sent down the truths of the Old Testament to posterity, written in their own blood. The Old Testament Apocrypha has a world of its own to narrate and make immortal.

If it were announced that "a box of writings had just been discovered by the archeologists of Oriental lands, containing narratives, and stories, and poems, and visions, and apocalypses, and ethical treatises, giving voices to the Interbiblical period of silences between the Testa-



ments," what a rush there would be toward these valuable relics; and what an amount of study would be given them; and what books and magazine articles would issue from the press setting them before an interested public! Such a literature we have in these fourteen Greek books known as the Old Testament Apocrypha. Let justice be done to this literature! Let it be treated as tho it were new-found! It is, as Doctor Stalker of Glasgow says, "*the background of the Life of Christ.*" Certainly he who best knows it is best able to pass on in his Bible study from the Old Testament to the New. It is a bridge between Malachi and Matthew.

We first come into touch with the Old Testament Apocrypha when handling *the Septuagint*, the Greek Version of the Old Testament scriptures. It is part and parcel of that Alexandrian canon of Holy Writ. It is never found in the Palestinian or Hebrew canon of the scriptures. What precisely regulated the Hebrews in determining their canon, it would be hard to say. They admitted nothing that was not written in the Hebrew. They admitted nothing after the cessation of prophecy. This at least is what has been held by scholars up to a late period. The books of the Apocrypha were, therefore, too late for canonicity. The Greeks were more hospi-

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

table to literature than the Hebrews. They did not draw any linguistical line. They were world-wide rulers, and that gave them a world-wide spirit. It liberalized them. The Greek-speaking Hebrews imperceptibly partook of this large spirit; and hence were more willing for a wider canon of scripture. The Septuagint was executed in Egypt about 200 B. C., and either then or afterward the translators incorporated the fourteen books of the Apocrypha with the books of the Old Testament, evidently under the impression that they were akin to them. In external form they do look as tho they were of kin. Some of them are historical books like The Kings and Ezra—viz: First and Second Maccabees. Some of them are historical romance like Jonah—viz: Tobit and Judith. Some of them are an apocalypse like the visions of Isaiah—viz: Second Esdras. Some of them are philosophical works like Proverbs and Ecclesiastes—viz: the Wisdom literature of the Apocrypha. Like the Old Testament, the Apocrypha has scattered through it both prayers and psalms. In bulk, the fourteen books of the Apocrypha amount to about a quarter of the Old Testament.

From the very first the addition of these books, in the Greek Version, to those of the Old Testa-

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

ment was denounced by the Jews of Palestine; but as the Greek translation, *the Septuagint*, became more and more the Bible of all worshipers outside of Palestine, and as these foreign worshipers were greater in number than the Palestinian worshipers, *the Apocrypha* was soon regarded as part and parcel of the Bible. This was its career: It continued always a part of the Greek Version and from the Greek Version it passed into the Latin Version, the Vulgate; and from the Vulgate it passed into the Christian Church, and was bound up in the Bible thereof until the time of the Reformation. Since the Reformation it has had various treatments. It has been both canonized and anathematized. It has been rejected as part of the Bible, and it has been accepted. Luther, altho his Bible of 1534 A. D. included it, finally rejected it because his opponents used texts from it in teaching the intercession of angels, Tobit 11:12-15, and of departed saints, 2 Macc. 15:12-14, and prayers for the dead, 2 Macc. 12:44-45, and the merit of almsgiving, Tobit 3:10, 4:7; Ecc. 3:30. The English Protestants followed the example of Luther. In a sermon before the House of Commons in 1643, the preacher complained of the custom of putting the Apocrypha between the Old Testament and the New. He spoke eloquently: "Thus

sweetly and nearly should the two Testaments join together, and thus divinely would they kiss each other, but that the wretched Apocrypha doth thrust in between."

This is the way the Westminster Confession of Faith expresses itself: "The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of Divine Inspiration, are not part of the Canon of Scripture: and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved nor made use of, than other human writings." This is the anathema side of the story of the Apocrypha.

Its Canonical side is this: It started as part of the Bible with the Greek Canon which was the Bible of all nations outside of Palestine, and was accepted as such. It has been translated into all the languages into which the Septuagint was translated. The Apocrypha had its influence upon many of the New Testament writers, as the parallelisms between it and the New Testament show. It was quoted as scripture by numbers of the early Christian fathers. Two of the great historical branches of the Christian Church, the Greek and the Roman, the Eastern and the Western, containing by far the greater numbers of Christendom, voted it into the Canon of Scripture, and still stand by that vote. Up

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

until a recent date the great Church of England has stood with the Greek and the Roman church in advocating its canonicity. When the British Bible Society was discussing the advisability of dropping it from between the Testaments in the Bibles issued by that Society, Bishop Wordsworth pleaded strongly for its retention in these words: "If you carry a Bible without the Apocryphal books into Egypt, Greece, Asia, and Palestine—that is, into those very countries whence the Gospel derived its origin and language—you would be told that you have not the Bible, but only a mutilated copy of it. The Greek Church would renounce you as guilty of sectarian error, if you presented her with a Bible not containing the Apocryphal books. If you pass over into Italy and France, or to Spain and Portugal, and endeavor to circulate such Bibles among persons, who, as we all assert, are in great need of the scriptures, they will immediately say to you: 'This may be an English Bible, but it is not the Bible of Christendom. It excludes books which the Eastern and Western Churches have never ceased to read from the earliest times to this hour.'"

There is one thing upon which all can agree, those who assert its canonicity and those who

deny it; and that is this: It is a telling witness to the existence and worth of the Old Testament scriptures which we all canonize. It honors the books of the Old Testament, and the grand personages who walk the pages of the Old Testament books, and the Holy doctrines therein taught. It holds up the same worship of the One living and true God, and it continues the history of the same Messianic people. It turns the Interbiblical period from darkness into light, and from blank spaces into readable pages. It explains why the New Testament begins as it does begin; and from the very start it makes us feel at home in reading the Story of the Christ.

It is time now to let the Old Testament Apocrypha speak for itself. This we can do by presenting a brief analysis of its books, and by giving excerpts from its pages.

The books of the Apocrypha are not all of one class—either for length, or for value. There are some of the fourteen books that consist only of a few verses, and require only to be named with the briefest comment. Let us notice these first. They are such as

*The Remainder of Esther.* The Book of Esther in the Old Testament canon has been objected to, from time immemorial, because

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

the name of God does not occur in the book. This fragment of writing in the Apocrypha is meant to supplement that supposed defect, and thus make the Book of Esther more worthy of canonicity. God is mentioned in this fragment, meant to be added to the Book of Esther; and He is mentioned over and over. Now all this is a work of supererogation. For every one can see that the Book of Esther is simply a story of the watchful providence of God over His own. The Book needs no supplement.

*Bel and the Dragon.* This fragment is supposed to belong to the end of the Book of Daniel. Altho Daniel proves the destruction of Bel, the false God and of the dragon, he does not need this story to add to his greatness nor to the fame of his fidelity. Some one wrote this fragment to expose the impostures of idolatry. "In his second part of *Robinson Crusoe*, Defoe, with some changes, makes use of the Dragon of this Apocryphal writing."

*The Prayer of Manasses.* This shortest of the Apocryphal writings is regarded as an appendix to Chronicles of the Old Testament canon. It is represented as being offered by Manasses, King of Judah, when he was held captive in Babylon. It is a confession of sin and



a cry for forgiveness. It would make a helpful form in any church liturgy. It can be studied with profit.

*Baruch, with the Epistle of Jeremiah.* Ba-ruch, the scribe, was secretary to Jeremiah. He shared his master's exile in Egypt. This book, which bears his name, is full of history and exhortation and law; the interpretation of God's dealings with His people; and prayers of the highest order. The one long prayer in it, which is the real burden of the book, is so close to the prayer recorded in Daniel 9:7-19 that some commentators have been led to ask: "Which is the original?" This book reads so much like the Old Testament, that it is regarded by many as an appendix to Jeremiah.

*The Song of the Three Holy Children.* This Song was supposed to be sung by the martyrs, of the Book of Daniel, in the furnace of fire into which they were cast for their refusal to worship the idol. It is a Hymn of Adoration. It has been embodied in all the liturgies of Christendom, and given a most honored place. It is known as the *Benedicite*. It contains a splendid protest against idolatry, and an invocation of all that is great and strong, beautiful and holy, to join in the perpetual benediction of the Source of all. Charles Kingsley describes it as

the very crown and flower of the Old Testament. The very monotony of form, with its accumulated doxologies, is itself effective. It runs thus: "O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord: *Praise and exalt him above all forever.*" Again and again and again sounds forth the refrain: "*Praise and exalt him above all forever.*" Kingsley writes: "It is like the monotony of the winds and the waves, and powerfully suggests to the imagination the amplitude and splendor of God's world by the sublimity of its universal chorus of praise."

So much for the shorter books of the Apocrypha. Let us look next at those that are much longer. They are such as these:

*The History of Susanna.* Susanna was the pure wife of a pure man in Israel. Her story reminds us of the story of Joseph's temptation by Potiphar's wife; only in this case the tempters are men. Two of the elders of Israel, smitten by her beauty, planned to seduce her. She resisted them. In revenge they sought her condemnation and death. They swore that they found her in compromising relations with a young man, and had her convicted of unfaithfulness to her husband, and sentenced to be stoned. They told her they would do this if she did not yield to them. Her reply was: "It

is better to fall, as ye threaten, than to sin in the sight of the Lord." When Susanna was led forth to be put to death, young Daniel comes upon the scene. He is full of indignation. Lifting up his voice he cries: "I am clear from the blood of this woman." Then all the people turned them toward him, and said: "What mean these words that thou hast spoken?" So he standing in the midst of them said: "Are ye such fools, ye sons of Israel, that without examination, or knowledge of the truth, ye have condemned a daughter of Israel? Return again to the place of judgment; for they have borne false witness against her." Wherefore all the people turned again in haste, and the elders said unto him: "Come sit down among us, and show it us, seeing God hath given thee honor of an elder." Then Daniel said unto them: "Put these two aside one far from another, and I will examine them." So when they were put asunder, he called one of them and said unto him: "O thou that art waxen old in wickedness, now thy sins are come to light. For thou hast condemned the innocent and hast let the guilty go free; albeit the Lord saith, 'The innocent and the righteous shalt thou not slay.' Now then, if thou hast seen her, tell me under what tree sawest thou them companying together?" Who answered: "Under a mastick

tree.” And Daniel said: “Right well hast thou lied against thine own head; for even now the angel of the Lord hath received sentence of God to cut thee in two.”

So he put him aside and commanded to bring the other and said unto him: “O thou seed of Canaan, and not of Judah, beauty hath deceived thee, and lust hath perverted thine heart. But this daughter of Judah would not abide your wickedness. Now therefore tell me, under what tree didst thou take them companying together?” Who answered him: “Under a holm tree.” Then said Daniel unto him: “Right well hast thou also lied against thine own head; for the angel of God waiteth with the sword to cut thee in two that he may destroy thee.” With that all the assembly cried out with a loud voice and praised God who saveth them that trust in Him. And they arose against the two elders, whom Daniel had convicted of false witness by their own mouth, and they did unto them according to the Law of Moses; and they put them to death. From that day forth was Daniel had in great reputation in the sight of the people.

It was here that Shakespeare got those words which he put into the mouth of Shylock:

"A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!  
O wise young judge, how I honor thee!"

The early Christians were fond of this book in the days of their persecution; so in the catacombs we find Susanna pictured in her innocence, representing the innocent Lamb of the Church between the wolves ready to destroy her. The story inspires faith in God. It also sets into the light the value of *cross-examination* in courts of justice as a means of getting at the facts of a case.

There are two charming historical romances in the Apocrypha: *Judith and Tobit*.

No description, or series of quotations, could do these two books justice. They must be read in their entirety to be known and appreciated. The book of *Judith* is a romance with a political motive. It sets forth the power of woman's beauty. Like Queen Esther, in Israel's extremity, Judith consecrates her beauty to the cause of country, and by it wins. Do not hold up holy hands in horror, and cry: What if Holofernes had succeeded in carrying out the dictates of his lust! He did not succeed. He lost his head, and Judith proved herself to be to her country another Jael, the wife of Heber. Judith was not a second Delilah. She was not in any sense that type of woman. She was a

pure woman. Her heroic plans grew out of her faith in God. Only a woman of faith could dare what she dared. She was a woman of prayer; and we have recorded here the prayer which she offered on the threshold of her venture. We have here, too, the psalm of praise which she sang in celebration of the victory which God gave her and her people. The motto of the story written large is: "Our fathers trusted in thee and thou didst deliver them." Ruskin in his *Mornings in Florence*, studying that celebrated painting of *Judith and Holofernes*, writes of Judith: "The conception of facts and the ideas of Jewish womanhood are here, grand and real as a marble statue, a possession for all ages. . . . She is not merely the Jewish Delilah to the Assyrian Samson; but the mightiest, purest, highest type of high passion in severe womanhood offered to our human memory."

Not a word about *Tobit* with its angelic ministrations, its courtship and marriage. Of Tobit's Job-like experience, and of the grand ending of his life,—not a word. Read this book of the Apocrypha and be charmed. Read it, and learn of the Providential Hand in the life of the man of God. Nothing in *The Arabian Nights* is more magical, more bewitching, more satisfying. In the 1549 Version of the Angli-

can prayer-book, the benediction-prayer of the marriage service makes use of the Book of Tobit. It reads: "O God, as Thou didst send thy angel Raphael to Tobias and Sara the daughter of Raguel, to their great comfort; so vouchsafe to send Thy blessing upon these thy servants."

There are *two books* in the Apocrypha known by the name *Esdras*.

*Esdras* is the Greek form of *Ezra*. These books were probably written just before the days of Christ; or, about the very time of Christ. *First Esdras* is a resetting of the story of the Jews' return from captivity; which we have in Chronicles, Nehemiah, and Ezra of the Old Testament. It was out of this book that our famous saying grew—viz: "*Truth is mighty and will prevail.*" These are the words of *First Esdras*: "Truth abideth and is strong forever: she liveth and conquereth forevermore. . . . Blessed be the God of truth."

*Second Esdras* is by far the more important of the books of *Esdras*. "It is only in the Revised Version that the complete book is put into the hands of English readers: for by a discovery made in 1875 A. D. by Professor Bensly, a new chapter was discovered at Amiens." It is an apocalypse. It was widely adopted by Christians and the critics say was interpo-



lated by a Christian hand. "Filled with bitter disappointment at Judea's hard fate, the author was possessed by the great hope of the coming rule of God under the scepter of a *Son of Man*. This is the central tenet of the author's faith."

Three out of the six dreams of the book are studied dialogs.

1. "Why has God made this sinful and sorrowing world?" The angel of light answers that many problems are beyond man's power of solution. "Why then was understanding given to man, if he is not to solve difficult questions?" And the angel answers that the next age will bring the solution, and gives signs of the approaching end very similar to the signs detailed in Matt. 24.

2. "Why has God chosen the people of Israel and endowed them with this truth only to allow them to be trodden under foot of all men?" The angel replies that God loves his people more than Esdras does or can. "Canst thou understand all that God understands?" He Himself will judge and rectify the world.

3. "Why do not God's chosen ones possess the world?" The angel declares that the present strait and difficult road leads assuredly to a better future, which will be brought in by God's anointed Son. The compassionate character of



God is sufficient assurance that this must be so.

There is a close parallelism between *Esdras* and the teaching of the early Christians; so much so, that it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that chapters 1, 2, 15 and 16 are by a Christian hand. To this most authorities agree.

“This strange book gives to *angelology* the archangel Uriel to complete the glorious quaternion—Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and Uriel—who stood on the four corners of the throne of God. It also sets on foot the legend of the Lost Tribes of Israel mysteriously hidden in the depths of the East, awaiting the day in which the Messiah shall lead them back to their own land.”

There are two books of *Maccabees* in the Apocrypha.

The First is written by a Sadducee; the Second is written by a Pharisee. The First deals in sober narration of historical facts. It is wholly objective. The Second goes behind the facts and gives the subjective life of the Maccabees. It makes out that they were men of visions, and ideals, and therefore men of action. Here is where we get our history of the Interbiblical period, the period *between the Two Testaments*. It fills the gap of the silent centuries. Here is

where we learn of the change of the World-power from the East to the West: from the Persian to the Grecian. Here is where we learn of the men and the measures, the wars and the martyrdoms which make the Heroic and Post-exilic era of the Palestinian Jews. The Covenant-purpose of God was on the march to Bethlehem and Calvary; and nothing was able to stop it. Everything helped it on.

The story of the Maccabees has not had its best and final telling as yet. It awaits a competent and future historian. A great host of things has got to be gathered, and weighed, and sifted, and properly estimated, and rightly related. It is at this point that the Old Testament Apocrypha shall yet serve the world.

The *Wisdom Literature of the Apocrypha* remains to be noticed. This literature consists of two books: the book of *Ecclesiasticus*, and the book of *The Wisdom of Solomon*. Both of these are long books: *Ecclesiasticus* having fifty-one chapters and *The Wisdom of Solomon* having nineteen chapters. These are considered the finest books of the Apocrypha.

The book of *Ecclesiasticus* is of a type similar to the Old Testament book of *Proverbs*. It is just twice as long as the book of *Proverbs*. It is the oldest known Apocryphon. It is preceded

by a graceful preface, in which the author says that he translated the book into Greek while in Egypt under the reign of Euergetes—i. e., about the year 230 B. C. The book he tells us was written by his grandfather, and in Hebrew. His grandfather's name was Jesus—"Jesus the son of Sirach." This book like the book of *Proverbs* has *Wisdom* for its theme; and on this theme the writer pours forth all his resources in eulogies upon *Wisdom* like the eulogies which we find in the books of *Job* and *Proverbs*. The book also discusses how a man shall bear himself wisely and avoid foolishness in all the departments of life—in one's table-manners; in one's money-matters; in social intercourse; in the home; in the state; *et al.* The book treats of the divine order of the world; and here the author soars so high that he finds relief for his pent-up feelings only in an outburst of prayer. The book ends with what is known as the grand *Hymn of the Forefathers* which reminds one of the famous eleventh chapter of "The Epistle to the Hebrews." We have here in enlarged form what in the Epistle to the Hebrews we have in striking and condensed form. Let me give a few selections from Ecclesiasticus! The golden rule is here: "Consider thy neighbor's liking by thine own." Chap. 31:15. The contam-

ination of bad association is here: "He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled." Chap. 13: 1. Here also is the backbone of honesty: "Speak not against the truth and be not abashed for thine ignorance. Be not ashamed to make confession of thy sins, nor swim against the stream of conviction." Chapter 4: 25.

On friendship I select this fragment: "Nothing is to be taken in exchange for a friend." "Forsake not an old friend, for the new is not comparable to him." "As new wine so is a new friend: if it become old thou shalt drink it with gladness." Addison in the *Spectator*, No. 78, thus comments on what the author says of friendship: "How finely he describes the art of making friends by obliging and affable behavior! With what prudence doth he caution us in the choice of friends! With what strokes of nature, I could almost say of humor, has he described the behavior of a treacherous and self-interested friend! I am wonderfully pleased with this sentence of his in which he speaks of the rewards of true friendship: 'A virtuous man shall as a blessing meet with a friend who is as virtuous as himself!'"

His teaching on forgiveness is strangely prophetic of Christian ethics: "Forgive thy neighbor the hurt he hath done unto thee, so shalt thy

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

sins be forgiven thee when thou prayest. One man beareth hatred against his brother; and doth he seek pardon from the Lord?" Chap. 28:2-3. Here is the humanitarianism he teaches: "Be as a father unto the fatherless, and instead of a husband unto their mother: so shalt thou be a son of the Most High, and He shall love thee more than thy mother doth." "Be not wanting to them that weep; and mourn with them that mourn. Be not slow to visit a sick man; for by such things thou shalt gain love."

For the close of the Book of Ecclesiasticus we have *The Hymn of the Forefathers*. It begins on this wise (I give simply its prelude): "Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers who begat us. Such as bore rule in their kingdoms and were men renowned for their power, giving counsel by their understanding; such as have brought tidings in prophecies; leaders of the people by their counsels, wise were their words of instruction; such as sought out musical tunes and set verses in writing; rich men furnished with ability, living peaceably in their habitations. All these were honored in their generation, and were a glory in their day."

Then follows a note of pathos singularly moving in its power: "There be some who have no memorial, who are perished as tho they had

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

not been, and who are become as tho they had not been born, and their children after them. But these were men of mercy whose righteous deeds have not been forgotten. . . . Their bodies are buried in peace but their name liveth to all generations. Peoples will declare their wisdom and the congregation will tell out their praise.”

This splendid tribute of reverence for the dead is read wherever the illustrious of Christendom are committed to the grave. Artist, thinker, prophet, hero, psalmist, priest, warrior, king, philanthropist,—all have their place in this roll of fame and are praised. Read this hymn and feel its uplift!

I mention next *The Book of the Wisdom of Solomon*. This book, which is called “the gem of the whole Apocrypha,” was written from the year 50° to 100 B. C. Its place of origin was Alexandria, Egypt. The author was a great writer, using almost classical Greek. He was an Alexandrian Jew. There is not a Greek book in scripture that can be compared with this book for strength of style, unless it be the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is studied rhetoric highly wrought, such as they loved in the later era of Greek literature.

The book is entitled *The Wisdom of Solomon*—i. e., it affects to have Solomon as its author.

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

In those days it was common to ascribe to books the names of famous men; not for the purpose of deception, but for the very same reason that Robert Burns when expressing his high patriotic feelings, put them in the mouth of Wallace at the battle of Bannockburn. For a like reason this book of Wisdom is ascribed to Solomon.

The writer's purpose is fairly evident throughout the book. The Jews were scattered through foreign lands and peculiarly open to skeptic and Pagan influences. They were beginning to feel the attraction of Greek thought. He writes, therefore, to strengthen his compatriots in an intelligent grasp of religion by declaring the high truths of Divine Wisdom. His cardinal *thesis* is that the universe is penetrated throughout by the living presence of wisdom, the power that shapes and directs all things. This wisdom is a personality which emanates from God. Listen!

Wisdom! there is in her a spirit quick of understanding, holy,  
Alone in kind, manifold,  
Subtile, freely moving,  
Clear in utterance, unpolluted,  
Distinct, unharmed,  
Loving what is good, keen, unhindered,  
Beneficent, loving toward man,

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

Stedfast, sure, free from care,  
All-powerful, all-surveying,  
And penetrating through all spirits  
That are quick of understanding, pure, most subtle:  
For wisdom is more mobile than any motion;  
Yea, she pervadeth and penetrateth all things by  
reason of her pureness.

For she is a breath of the power of God,  
And a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty;  
Therefore can nothing defiled find entrance into her.  
For she is an effulgence from everlasting light,  
And an unspotted mirror of the working of God,  
And an image of his goodness.

And she, being one, hath power to do all things;  
And remaining in herself, reneweth all things:  
And from generation to generation passing into holy  
souls

She maketh men friends of God, and prophets.  
For nothing doth God love save him that dwelleth  
with wisdom.

For she is fairer than the sun,  
And above all the constellations of the stars:  
Being compared with light, she is found to be before  
it;

For to the light of day succeedeth night,  
But against wisdom evil doth not prevail;  
But she reacheth from one end of the world to the  
other with full strength,



## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

And ordereth all things graciously.  
Her I loved and sought out from my youth,  
And I sought to take her for my bride,  
And I became enamored of her beauty.  
She glorifieth her noble birth in that it is given her  
to live with God,  
And the Sovereign Lord of all loved her.  
For she is initiated into the knowledge of God,  
And she chooseth out for him his works.  
But if riches are a desired possession in life,  
What is richer than wisdom, which worketh all things?  
And if understanding worketh,  
Who more than wisdom is an artificer of the things  
that are?  
And if a man loveth righteousness,  
The fruits of wisdom's labor are virtues,  
For she teacheth soberness and understanding, right-  
eousness and courage;  
And there is nothing in life for men more profitable  
than these.

*Wisdom 7.*

This magnificent description of wisdom has been pronounced one of the noblest passages of human eloquence. It has been placed alongside of the Hymn of Cleanthes, and the Visions of Plato; and there it deserves to be placed.

Among the chief excellencies of this book of

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

*Wisdom* is its teachings on immortality. This doctrine may be shadowed forth by other writers of the times before Christ, but here it shines with all the prismatic radiance of the light. The author founds his doctrine of immortality on two of the strongest bases—viz: the imperfection of life without it, and the everlasting goodness of God. These are some of his words, and they are the last which I quote: “By singleness of heart alone is God found; the pure shall live with God.” “God made not death.” “To know Thee, O God, is perfect righteousness; yea, to know thy power is the root of immortality.” “The just man boasteth that God is his Father, and that he is God’s son.” “Thou sparest all, for they are thine, O Sovereign Lord, Thou Lover of souls.” “God created man for immortality, and made him an image of His own eternity.” “The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God; in the eyes of the unwise they seem to perish, but they are in happiness. Their hope is full of eternity.” My fellow men, this teaching brings us pretty close to the *dictum* of the New Testament. We are ready now for the Christ who illumines life and immortality.

Such is the Old Testament Apocrypha! It is a whole library of books; in which we find sacred histories, and holy romances, and thrilling

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

songs of praise, and broad and uplifting prayers, and apocalypses that glow with the Light of Heaven. There may be, and there is, some dross here, but there is a lot of pure gold; and that gold is gold of the seventh refining. It has in it utterances that carry in them divine authority—i. e., the authority of conviction. These utterances have spiritual power over the human soul. They meet with an approving response. They win the assent of the mind, and the consent of the conscience, and the sanction of all the faculties. This is the only authority that any set of writings can have. “It is the authority of inherent spiritual excellence, bearing its own weight, making its own impress, winning its own sweet way among men, and gaining their admiration, and purifying and invigorating the spirit and character of mankind.” The Apocrypha is literature of no mean order. Now and again it gives us sublime and captivating climaxes, and these climaxes illustrate and prove the truth of the beautiful Hebrew Proverb: “Words fitly spoken are like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” These climaxes are the veritable silver and gold of Holy literature. They are the Truth of God in the form of strength and beauty.

## BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

---

All these things are the Book of the covenant of the  
Most High God,  
Even the law which Moses commanded us for a her-  
itage unto the assemblies of Jacob.  
It is He that maketh *wisdom* abundant, as Pishon,  
And as Tigris in the days of new fruits;  
That maketh understanding full as Euphrates,  
And as Jordan in the days of harvest;  
That maketh instruction to shine forth as the light,  
As Gihon in the days of vintage,  
The first man knew her not perfectly;  
And in like manner the last hath not traced her out.  
For her thoughts are filled from the sea,  
And her counsels from the great deep.

*Ecclesiasticus 24: 23-29.*









Q. 050.2

III  
II  
II  
II



4873

Gregg  
Between the Testaments

BM  
176  
G7

BM176 G7  
Between the Testaments;

Gregg, David,



0 0000 00053798 5  
Gardner-Webb University Library

**DATE DUE**

DEC 14 1998

**Return Material Promptly**